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THE SEPOY WAR IN INDIA.

A HISTORY

OF THE

SEPOY WAR IN INDIA.

1857—1858.

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BY

JOHN WILLIAM KAYE, F.R.S.,

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN."

VOL. II.

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☞ It is stated in a note at page 134, that the Act of the Legislative Council, May 30, 1857, extending the powers of the local authorities for the suppression of mutiny and rebellion, is given entire in the Appendix. The omission was not discovered till the whole volume was printed off. The Act will be given (with the later Acts to the same effect) in the next volume.

CONTENTS OF VOL II.

BOOK IV.—THE RISING IN THE NORTH-WEST.

CHAPTER I.

THE DELHI HISTORY.

PAGE

Importance of the Seizure of Delhi—Moral Influences—Position of the Delhi Family—Early History—Successive Degradations—The Question of Succession—Intrigues of Zeenut-Mehal—Death of Prince Fakir-Oodeen—Renewed Intrigues—Views of Lord Canning—State of Mahomedan Feeling at Delhi—The Native Press—Correspondence with Persia--The Proclamation—Temper of the Soldiery 1

CHAPTER II.

THE OUTBREAK AT MEERUT.

State of the Third Cavalry—The Court of Inquiry—The Court Martial—Imprisonment of the Eighty-five—The Tenth of May—Release of the Prisoners—General Revolt of the Sepoys—Inactivity of the European Troops—Escape of the Mutineers—Question of Responsibility Considered 43

CHAPTER III.

THE SEIZURE OF DELHI.

The Meerut Mutineers at Delhi—Events at the Palace—Progress of Insurrection—State of the British Cantonment — Mutiny of the Delhi Regiments—The Explosion of the Magazine—Escape of the British Officers—Massacre of the Prisoners . . . . . : 75

CHAPTER IV.

CALCUTTA IN MAY.

PAGE

Efforts of Lord Canning—State of Public Feeling in Calcutta—Apprehensions and Alarms—Bearing of the Governor-General—Correspondence with the Commander-in-Chief—The First Movement towards Delhi—The Volunteer Question—First Arrival of Succours—Appearance of Colonel Neill 111

CHAPTER V.

LAST DAYS OF GENERAL ANSON.

General Anson at Umballah—First Movement of Troops—The Military Departments—Difficulty of Movement—The Panic on the Hills—The Siege-Train—Remonstrances against Delay—Views of Lord Canning and Sir John Lawrence—Good Work of the Civilians—Conduct of the Sikh Chiefs—The March to Kurnaul—Death of General Anson—Succession of Sir Henry Barnard . . . 137

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARCH UPON DELHI.

State of Meerut—The Sappers and Miners—Defence of Roorkhee—Colonel Baird Smith—Mutiny of the Sappers—March of Wilson's Brigade—Battles of the Hindun—Junction with Barnard—Battle of Budlee-ka-Serai—Position before Delhi 172

BOOK V.—PROGRESS OF REBELLION IN UPPER INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

BENARES AND ALLAHABAD.

The North-West Provinces—State of Affairs at Benares—State of the City—The Outbreak at Azimgurh—Arrival of General Neill—Disarming of the Thirty-seventh—The Mutiny at Jaunpore—Affairs at Allahabad—Mutiny of the Sixth—Appearance of General Neill—The Fort Secured—Retributory Measures 197

CHAPTER II.

CAWNPORE.

PAGE

Arrival of Havelock at Allahabad—Meeting with Neill—Advance of Renaud—Havelock's Brigade—Cawnpore—The City—The Cantonment—Sir Hugh Wheeler—Dangers of his Position—The Entrenchments—Revolt of the Native Regiments—Doondoo Punt, "Nana Sahib"—The Siege—The Capitulation—Massacre at the Ghaut—Escape of a Solitary Boat—Its Adventures on the River—Heroic Deeds of Thomson and Delafosse 276

CHAPTER III.

THE MARCH TO CAWNPORE.

Havelock at Allahabad—Equipment of the Brigade—Advance towards Cawnpore—Junction with Renaud—The Battles of Futtehpore, Aong, and Cawnpore—The Massacre of the Women and Children. 357

CHAPTER IV.

RE-OCCUPATION OF CAWNPORE.

Havelock at Cawnpore—State of the Soldiery—Discouraging Circumstances—Flight of the Nana—Destruction of the Bithoor Palace—Arrival of Neill—His Punishment of Criminals—First Movement towards Lucknow—General Aspects of the Rebellion . 386

BOOK VI.—THE PUNJAB AND DELHI.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST CONFLICTS IN THE PUNJAB.

General Condition of the Punjab—Sources of Danger—British Relations with Afghanistan—Causes of Confidence—Montgomery at Lahore—Events at Meean-Meer—Services of Brigadier Corbett—Disarming of the Native Regiments—Relief of the Fort of Lahore—Events at Umritsur and Govindghur—The Mutinies at Ferozpore and Phillour 417

CHAPTER II.

PESHAWUR AND RAWUL-PINDEE.

shawur—Internal and External Dangers—The Civil and Military Authorities—Edwardes—Nicholson—Cotton—Chamberlain—The

PAGE
Council at Peshawur—Arrangements for a Movable Column—Sir John Lawrence at Rawul-Pindee—Despatch of Troops to Delhi—The March of the Guide Corps 447

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF EVENTS IN THE PUNJAB.

General Policy of Sir John Lawrence—The Raising of Local Levies—Events at Peshawur—Disarming of the Native Regiments—Punishment of Deserters—Mutiny of the Fifty-fifth—Expedition to Hote-Murdan—Mutiny of the Sixty-fourth—The Outbreak at Jullundhur 471

CHAPTER IV.

DELHI—FIRST WEEKS OF THE SIEGE.

General Barnard's Position—Importance of the Capture of Delhi—Delhi and its Environs—Question of an immediate Assault—Councils of War—Abandonment of the Night Attack—Waiting for Reinforcements—Engagements with the Enemy—The Centenary of Plassey—Arrival of Neville Chamberlain and Baird Smith—Death of General Barnard 513

CHAPTER V.

PROGRESS OF THE SIEGE.

General Reed in Command—Exertions of Baird Smith—Inadequacy of Resources—Question of Assault Renewed—Engagements with the Enemy—Hopes of the English—Assault Abandoned—Departure of General Reed—Brigadier Wilson in Command—His Position and Efforts—Social Aspects of the Camp—State of the Delhi Garrison 571

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST SUCCOURS FROM THE PUNJAB.

Question of the Abandonment of Peshawur—Views of Sir John Lawrence, Colonel Edwardes, and General Nicholson—Further Disasters in the Punjab—Jhelum and Sealkote—The Movable Column—Affair of the Trimmoo Ghaut—Nicholson at Delhi—The Battle of Nujufghur 587

APPENDIX 665

PREFACE TO VOL. II.

When the first volume of this book was published, I had little expectation that the second would be so long in course of completion, as the result has shown it to have been. In truth, I had not measured aright the extent of the work before me. But when I came to take account of the wealth of my materials, and to reflect upon the means of converting them into history, I saw clearly that the task I had undertaken was a more arduous and perplexing one than I had originally supposed.

It is not difficult to make the reader understand my perplexities; and I hope that, understanding, he will sympathise with them. The events to be narrated covered a large area of space, but were compressed within a small period of time. Chronologically they moved along parallel lines, but locally they were divergent and distracting. The question was how it was best to deal historically with all these synchronous incidents. To have written according to date, with some approach to fidelity of detail, a number of separate narratives, each illustrative of a particular day, or of a particular week, would have been easy to the writer, and would in some sort have represented the character of the crisis, one of the most distinguishing features of which was derived from the confusion and distraction engendered by the multiplicity of simultaneous outbursts in different parts of the country. This mode of treatment, however, though it might accurately reflect the situation, was not likely to gratify the reader. The multiplicity of personal and local names rapidly succeeding each other would have bewildered him, and no distinct impression would have been left upon his mind. But though the nature of the subject utterly forbade all thought of unity of place and unity of action, with reference to the scope of the entire work, there was a certain unification of the several parts which was practicable, and which suggested what might be called an episodical treatment of the subject, with such connecting links, or such a general framework or setting, as historical truth might permit. And, in fact, different parts of the country were so cut off from each other when mutiny and rebellion were at their height, that each series of operations for the suppression of local revolt had a separate and distinct character. Certainly, in the earlier stages of the War, there was no general design—little co-operation or cohesion. Every man did what was best in his eyes to meet with vigour and sagacity an unexpected crisis. The cutting of our telegraph-wires and the interruption of our posts were among the first hostile efforts of the insurgents in all parts of the country. Joint action on a large scale was thus rendered impossible, and at the commencement of the War it would scarcely have been desirable. For our people had to deal promptly with urgent symptoms, and references and consultations would have been fatal to success.

Thus circumstanced with respect to the component parts of this History, I could not easily determine to what particular events it would be best to give priority of narration. One thing soon became unpleasantly apparent to me. I had made a mistake in forecasting the plan of the entire work, in an "Advertisement" prefixed to the First Volume. It was impossible to write adequately, in this instalment of my book, of all the operations which I had originally intended to record. With materials of such great interest before me, it would have been unwise to starve the narrative; so I thought it best to make confession of error, and to expunge my too-hasty promises from subsequent editions of the work. In pursuance of this revised scheme, I was compelled to put aside much that I had written for this Second Volume, and though this has necessarily retarded its publication, it has placed me so much in advance with the work to be accomplished, that I hope to be able to produce the next volume after a much shorter interval of time.

The selection made for this volume from the chapters which I had written may not perhaps be the best, but it is at least sufficiently intelligible. After describing the earlier incidents of the mutiny, as at Meerut and Delhi, at Benares and Allahabad, and at different stations in the Punjab, I have narrated, up to a certain point, those two great series of operations—the one expedition starting from Bengal with troops drawn from the Littoral, the other from the North-Western Frontier, with forces derived from the Hill Stations and the Punjab—which were consummated in the capture of Delhi and the first relief of Lucknow. In the one I have traced the movements of Neill and Havelock, under the direction of Lord Canning, and in the other of Anson, Barnard, Wilson, and Nicholson, with the aid and inspiration of Sir John Lawrence. It is by thus following the fortunes of individuals that we may best arrive at a just conception of the general action of the whole. For it was by the energies of individual men, acting mostly on their own responsibility, that little by little rebellion was trodden down, and the supremacy of the English firmly re-established. It will be seen that I have adhered very closely to pure narrative. The volume, indeed, is a volume of fact, not of controversy and speculation; and as it relates to the earlier scenes of the great struggle for Empire, it is mostly an account of military revolt and its suppression.

Dealing with the large mass of facts, which are reproduced in the chapters now published, and in those which, though written, I have been compelled to reserve for future publication, I have consulted and collated vast piles of contemporary correspondence, and entered largely into communication, by personal intercourse or by letter, with men who have been individually connected with the events described. For every page published in this volume some ten pages have been written and compiled in aid of the narrative; and if I have failed in the one great object of my ambition, to tell the truth, without exaggeration on the one hand or reservation on the other, it has not been for want of earnest and laborious inquiry or of conscientious endeavour to turn my opportunities to the best account, and to lay before the public an honest exposition of the historical facts as they have been unfolded before me.

Still it is probable that the accuracy of some of the details in this volume, especially those of personal incident, may be questioned, perhaps contradicted, notwithstanding, I was about to say, all the care that I have taken to investigate them, but I believe that I should rather say "by reason of that very care." Such questionings or contradictions should not be too readily accepted; for, although the authority of the questioner may be good, there may be still better authority on the other side. I have often had to choose between very conflicting statements; and I have sometimes found my informants to be wrong, though apparently with the best opportunities of being right, and have been compelled to reject, as convincing proof, even the overwhelming assertion, "But, I was there." Men who are personally engaged in stirring events are often too much occupied to know what is going on beyond the little spot of ground which holds them at the time, and often from this restricted stand-point they see through a glass darkly. It is hard to disbelieve a man of honour when he tells you what he himself did; but every writer, long engaged in historical inquiry, has had before him instances in which men, after even a brief lapse of time, have confounded in their minds the thought of doing, or the intent to do, a certain thing, with the fact of having actually done it. Indeed, in the commonest affairs of daily life, we often find the intent mistaken for the act in the retrospect.

The case of Captain Rosser's alleged offer to take a Squadron of Dragoons and a Troop of Horse Artillery to Delhi on the night of the 10th of May (illustrated in the Appendix) may be regarded as an instance of this confusion. I could cite other instances. One will suffice:—A military officer of high rank, of stainless honour, with a great historical reputation, invited me some years ago to meet him, for the express purpose of making to me a most important statement, with reference to one of the most interesting episodes of the Sepoy War. The statement was a very striking one; and I was referred, in confirmation of it, to another officer, who has since become illustrious in our national history. Immediately on leaving my informant, I wrote down as nearly as possible his very words. It was not until after his death that I was able orally to consult the friend to whom he had referred me, as being personally cognisant of the alleged fact—the only witness, indeed, of the scene described. The answer was that he had heard the story before, but that nothing of the kind had ever happened. The asserted incident was one, as I ventured to tell the man who had described it to me at the time, that did not cast additional lustre on his reputation; and it would have been obvious, even if he had rejoiced in a less unblemished reputation, that it was not for self-glorification, but in obedience to an irrepressible desire to declare the truth, that he told me what afterwards appeared to be not an accomplished fact, but an intention unfulfilled. Experiences of this kind render the historical inquirer very sceptical even of information supposed to be on "the best possible authority." Truly, it is very disheartening to find that the nearer one approaches the fountain-head of truth, the further off we may find ourselves from it.*

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* It may be mentioned here (though not directly in confirmation of the above) as a curious illustration of the difficulty of discerning between truth and error, that the only statement seriously impugned in a former work of history by the author of this book, was the only one which he had made as the result of his own personal knowledge—the only fact which he had witnessed with his own eyes.

But, notwithstanding such discouraging instances of the difficulty of extracting the truth, even from the testimony of truthful men, who have been actors in the scenes to be described, I cannot but admit the general value of such testimony to the writer of contemporary history. And, indeed, there need be some advantages in writing of events still fresh in the memory of men to compensate for its manifest disadvantages. These disadvantages, however, ought always to be felt by the writer rather than by the reader. It has been often said to me, in reply to my inquiries, "Yes, it is perfectly true. But these men are still living, and the truth cannot be told." To this my answer has been: "To the Historian all men are dead." If a writer of contemporary history is not prepared to treat the living and the dead alike—to speak as freely and as truthfully of the former as of the latter, with no more reservation in the one case than in the other—he has altogether mistaken his vocation, and should look for a subject in prehistoric times. There are some actors in the scenes here described of whom I do not know whether they be living or whether they be dead. Some have passed away from the sphere of worldly exploits whilst this volume has been slowly taking shape beneath my pen. But if this has in any way influenced the character of my writing, it has only been by imparting increased tenderness to my judgment of men, who can no longer defend themselves or explain their conduct to the world. Even this offence, if it be one against historical truth, I am not conscious of having actually committed.

I have but a few more words to say, but because I say them last it must not be thought that I feel them least. I am painfully sensible that in this narrative

I have failed to do justice to the courage and constancy of many brave men, whose good deeds deserved special illustration in this narrative, and would have received it, but for the exigencies of time and space, which have forbidden an ampler record. This, perhaps, may be more apparent in other volumes than in this. But, whatever may be the omissions in this respect, I do not think that they will be attributed to any want of appreciation of the gallantry and fortitude of my countrymen in doing and in suffering. No one could rejoice more in the privilege of illustrating their heroic deeds than the author of these volumes. It is one of the best compensations of historical labour to be suffered to write of exploits reflecting so much honour upon the character of the nation.

J. W. K.

Penge—Midsummer, 1870.

ERRATA.

At page 13, line 11, for "Zeemut Mehal," read "*Zeenut*-Mehal." [Also in heading of Chapter I.]

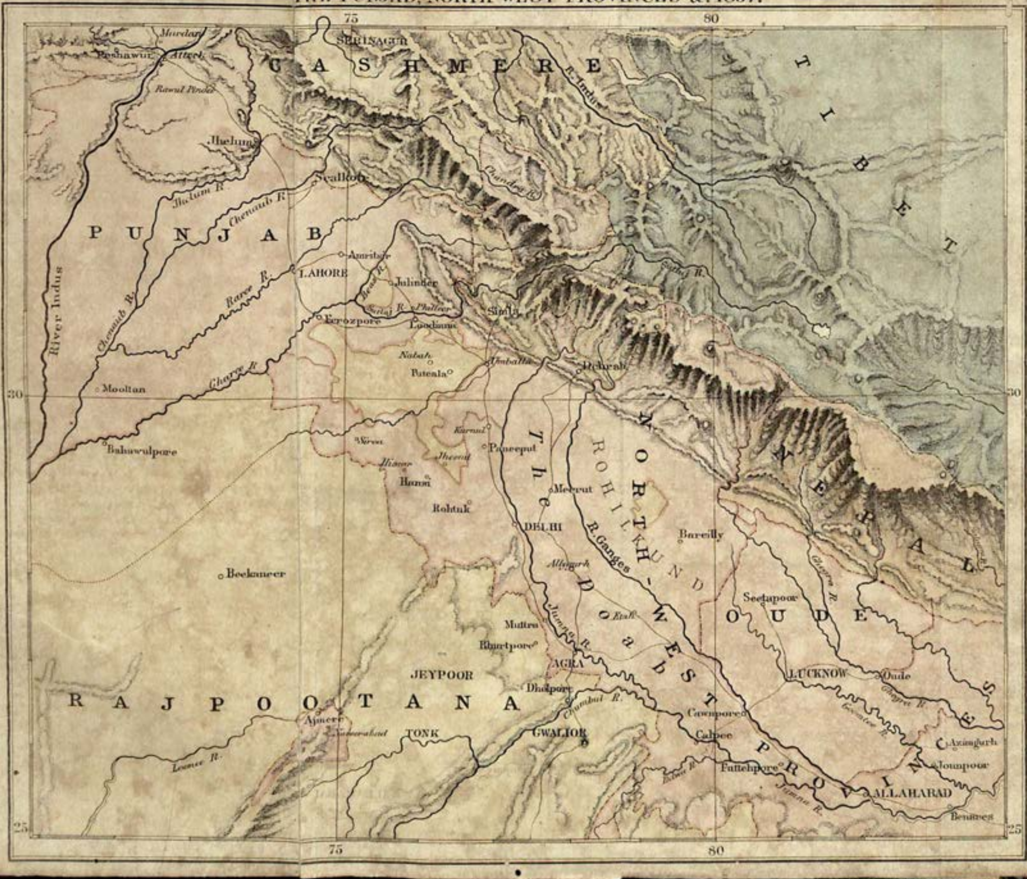
Page 100, line 13, for "Suraf-ood-dowlah," read "*Suraj*-ood-dowlah."

„ 131, line 15, for "beleagured posts," read "*beleaguered* post."

In Contents-heading to Chapter IV., Book IV., *dele* "Death of General Anson."

Page 1

THE PUNJAB, NORTH WEST PROVINCES &c. 1857.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CASHMERE
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Ravee R.
Chenaub R.
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Ghurra R.
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Bahawulpore
Nabah
Puteala
Umballa
Dehrah
Sirsa
Kurnal
Paneeput
Hissar
Jheend
Hansi
Rohtuk
Meerut
DELHI
The Doab
ROHILKHUND
NORTH-WEST PROVINCES
R. Ganges
Bareilly
Allygurh
Etah
Jumna R.
Muttra
Bhurtpore
AGRA
Dholpore
Chumbul R.
GWALIOR
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TONK
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NEPAL
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Ghagra R.
LUCKNOW
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Jumna R.
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HISTORY OF THE SEPOY WAR.

◆

BOOK IV.—*THE RISING IN THE NORTH-WEST.*

[MAY, 1857.]

◆

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SEIZURE OF DELHI—MORAL INFLUENCES—POSITION OF THE DELHI FAMILY—EARLY HISTORY—SUCCESSIVE DEGRADATIONS—THE QUESTION OF SUCCESSION—INTRIGUES OF ZEEMUT MEHAL—DEATH OF PRINCE FAKIR-OODEEN—RENEWED INTRIGUES—VIEWS OF LORD CANNING—STATE OF MAHOMEDAN FEELING AT DELHI—THE NATIVE PRESS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH PERSIA—*THE PROCLAMATION*—TEMPER OF THE SOLDIERY.

Lord Canning and the Delhi Question.

IT was a work of time at Calcutta to elicit all the details of the sad story briefly outlined in the preceding chapter. But the great fact was patent to Lord Canning that the English had been driven out of Delhi, and that, for a time, in that great centre of Mahomedanism, the dynasty of the Mogul Family was restored. The tremendous political significance of this revolution could not be misunderstood by the most obtuse, or glossed over by the most sanguine. The Emperors of Delhi had long ceased to exercise any substantial authority over the people whom they

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1804—57. had once governed. For fifty years the Master of the Delhi Palace had been, in the estimation of the English, merely a pageant and a show. But the pageantry, the show, the name, had never ceased to be living influences in the minds of the princes and people of India. Up to a comparatively recent period all the coin of India had borne the superscription of the Mogul; and the chiefs of India, whether Mahomedan or Hindoo, had still continued to regard the sanction given to their successions by that shadow of royalty, as something more assuring than any recognition which could come from the substance of the British Government. If the Empire of Delhi had passed into a tradition, the tradition was still an honoured one. It had sunk deeply into the memories of the people.

Doubtful, before, of the strength of these influences, Lord Canning now began to suspect that he had been misinformed. In the preceding year, he had mastered the whole Delhi history, and he knew full well the peculiar circumstances which at that period made it so perilous that the Imperial Family should be appealed to in aid of the national cause. He saw before him, in all their length and breadth, the incidents of family intrigue, which imparted a vigorous individuality to the hostility of the Mogul. He knew that the chief inmates of the palace had never been in a mood of mind so little likely to resist the temptations now offered to them. He knew that the old King himself, and his favourite wife who ruled him, had been for some time cherishing animosities and resentments, which rendered it but too likely that on the first encouraging occasion they would break into open hostility against the usurping Englishman, who had vaulted into the seat of the Mogul, reduced him to a suppliant, and thwarted him in all the most cherished wishes of his heart. 1804—57.

The Delhi story—Shah Allum.

With as much brevity as may suffice to make the position clear, the Delhi story must be told. The old King, Behaudur Shah, whose sovereignty had been proclaimed, was the second in descent from the Emperor Shah Allum, whom, blind, helpless, and miserable, the English had rescued from the gripe of the Mahrattas,* when at the dawn of the nineteenth century the armies of Lake and Wellesley broke up their powerful confederacy, and scattered the last hopes of the French. Shah Allum was the great-grandson of Aurungzebe, the tenth successor in a direct line from Timour, the great founder of the dynasty of the Moguls. Even in the depths of his misery and humiliation, he was regarded by the most magnificent of English viceroys as a mighty potentate, whom it was a privilege to protect, and sacrilege to think of supplanting. The "great game" of Lord Wellesley embraced nothing so stupendous as the usurpation of the Imperial throne. Perhaps it was, as his brother Arthur and John Malcolm declared, and as younger men suspected and hinted, that the Governor-General, worn out by the oppositions and restrictions of the Leadenhall-street Government, and broken in health by the climate of Calcutta, had lost his old daring and cast aside his pristine ambition. Perhaps it was believed by him and by his associates in the Council

1804.

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* Lord Lake's first interview with him is thus officially described in the records of the day: "In the magnificent palace built by Shah Jehan the Commander-in-Chief was ushered into the royal presence, and found the unfortunate and venerable Emperor, oppressed by the accumulated calamities of old age and degraded authority, extreme poverty and loss of sight, seated under a small tattered canopy, the remnant of his royal state, with every external appearance of the misery of his condition."

1804–5. Chamber that it would be sounder policy, tending more to our own grandeur in the end, to gather gradual strength from this protective connexion with the Emperor, before endeavouring to walk in the pleasant paths of imperialism. But in either case, he recoiled from the thought of its being suspected in England, that he wished to place the East India Company, substantively or vicariously, on the throne of the Moguls. "It has never," he wrote to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, June 2, 1805, "been in the contemplation of this Government to derive from the charge of protecting and supporting his Majesty the privilege of employing the Royal Prerogative as an instrument of establishing any control or ascendency over the States and Chieftains of India, or of asserting on the part of his Majesty any of the claims which, in his capacity of Emperor of Hindostan, his Majesty may be considered to possess upon the provinces originally composing the Mogul Empire. The benefits which the Governor-General in Council expected to derive from placing the King of Delhi and the Royal Family under the protection of the British Government, are to be traced in the statement contained in our despatch to your Honourable Committee of the 13th of July, 1804,* relative to the evils and embarrassments to which the British power might have been exposed by the prosecution of claims and pretensions on the part of the Mahrattas, or of the French, in the name and under the authority of his Majesty Shah Allum, if the person and family of that unhappy monarch had continued under the custody and control of those powers, and especially of the French." 1804—5.

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* The objects are thus enumerated in the despatch to which reference is made: "The deliverance of the Emperor Shah Allum from the control of the French power established in the North-West quarter of Hindostan, by which the Government of France has been deprived of a powerful instrument in the eventual prosecution of its hostile designs against the British Government in India, and the British Government has obtained a favourable opportunity of conciliating the confidence and securing the applause of surrounding states by providing a safe and tranquil asylum for the declining age of that venerable and unfortunate monarch, and a suitable maintenance for his numerous and distressed family."—*July* 13, 1804.

It must have taxed the ingenuity of Lord Wellesley, even with the experienced guidance and assistance of Sir George Barlow and Mr. Edmonstone, to design a scheme for the continuance or restoration of the Empire on a small scale—a scheme whereby Shah Allum might become more than a pensioner, a pageant, and a puppet, and yet less than the substance of a sovereign. He was to be a King and yet no King—a something and yet nothing—a reality and a sham at the same time. It was a solace to us, in the "great game," to know that we "held the King;" but it was a puzzle to us how to play the card. It was, indeed, a great political paradox, which Lord Wellesley's Government was called upon to institute; and he did the best that could be done, in the circumstances in which he was placed, to reconcile not only the House of Timour, but the people who still clung reverentially to the great Mahomedan dynasty, to the state of things which had arisen out of those circumstances. It was determined that a certain amount of that dignity, which is derived from territorial dominion, should still be attached to the person of the Emperor; that within certain limits he should still be the fountain of justice; and that (negatively) within those limits the power of life or death should be in his hands. And in addition to the revenues of the districts thus reserved as an appanage of the Throne, he and his family were to receive stipendiary allowances amounting to more than a hundred thousand pounds a year.

1804–5. Thus the Emperor of all the Indies—the Great Mogul, traditionally the grandest sovereign in the Universe—became, whilst still indued with the purple and the gold of imperial state, and rejoicing in the appearance of territorial dominion, virtually a pensioner of a Company of Merchants. The situation was one which conferred many advantages on the British Government in India, but it was not without its dangers. Even in the depths of his misery and degradation, the King's name was a pillar of strength; the rags of royalty were reverenced by the people. And Lord Wellesley saw clearly that if the ancestral State of the Mogul were perpetuated—if he were left to reside in the Palace of Shah Jehan, with all the accompaniments of his former grandeur around him, in the midst of a Mahomedan population still loyal to the House of Timour—there might some day be an attempt to reconstruct the ruined monarchy in the person of one of Shah Allum's successors, which might cause us grievous annoyance. So it was proposed that Monghyr should become the residence of the Imperial Family. But the old King shuddered at the thought of removal, and the shudder ran through his family, from the oldest to the youngest, male and female, relatives and dependants. Not, therefore, to inflict any further pain or humiliation upon them, Lord Wellesley consented that they should abide in the Delhi Palace. At some future time their removal might be effected without any cruel divulsions, any of those strainings and crackings of the heart-strings, which must attend the exodus of Princes born in the purple, with the memory of actual sovereignty still fresh within them.

1806. Akbar Shah. In December, 1806, Shah Allum died, and was succeeded by his son, Akbar Shah. It happened that the English officer, who at that time represented the British Government at Delhi, was a courtier of the old school, whose inveterate politeness of speech and manner had ample scope for exercise at the ex-imperial Court. Mr. Seton would have died rather than hurt the feelings of the humblest denizen of the Palace. In the caricatures of the period he was represented saluting Satan with a low bow, and hoping that his Majesty was well and prosperous. Associated, at this time, in a subordinate capacity with Mr. Seton, but much trusted, and consulted by him with the deference shown to an equal in age and position, was young Charles Metcalfe, who, although little more than a boy, saw clearly the store of future trouble which the British Government was laying up for itself by not curbing the pretensions of the now effete Mogul. "I do not conform," he wrote, "to the policy of Seton's mode of managing the Royal Family. It is by a submission of manner and conduct, carried on, in my opinion, far beyond the respect and attention which can be either prescribed by forms or dictated by a humane consideration for the fallen fortunes of a once illustrious family. It destroys entirely the dignity which ought to be attached to him who represents the British Government, and who in reality is to govern at Delhi; and it raises (I have perceived the effect disclosing itself with rapidity) ideas of imperial power and sway which ought to be put to sleep for ever. As it is evident that we do not mean to restore imperial power to the King, we ought not to pursue a conduct calculated to make him aspire to it. Let us treat him with the respect due to his situation; let us make him comfortable in respect to circumstances, and give him all the means, as far as possible, of 1806.

1806—37. being happy; but, unless we mean to re-establish his power, let us not encourage him to dream of it." No grey-haired politician could have written anything wiser than this; and when, after the lapse of a few years, the writer himself became "Resident" at Delhi, and had the supreme direction of affairs, all his boyish impressions were confirmed. He was brought face to face with a state of things offensive alike to reason and to humanity; but neither he nor his successors in the Residency could do more than recommend one measure after another which might gradually mitigate the evils which stood out so obtrusively before them.

Time passed; and the English in India, secure in their great possessions, dreading no external enemy, and feeling strong within them the power to tread down any danger which might arise on Indian soil, advanced with a firmer step and a bolder presence. They no longer recoiled from the thought of Empire. What had appeared at the commencement of the century to be perilous presumption, now seemed to be merely the inevitable accident of our position. The "great game" had been imperfectly played out in Lord Wellesley's time; and ten years afterwards Lord Hastings saw before him the results of that settlement where nothing was settled, and resolved to assert the supremacy of the British Government over all the potentates of India. Times were changed both at home and abroad, and our feelings had changed with them. The Company had not quite forgotten that it had been established on a "pure mercantile bottom." But the successes of our arms in Europe had given us confidence in ourselves as a great military nation; and, though the Directors in Leadenhall-street, true to their old traditions, might still array themselves against all projects for the extension of our military and political power in the East, it was felt that the people of England would applaud the bolder policy, if it were only successful. From that time England became arbiter of the fate of all the princes of India. There was no longer any reluctance to assert our position as the paramount power. It was a necessary part of the scheme then to put down the fiction of the Delhi Empire. The word Empire was, thenceforth, to be associated only with the British power in the East; and the mock-majesty, which we had once thought it serviceable to us to maintain, was now, as soon as possible, to be dismissed as inconvenient lumber. 1806—37.

It might be narrated how, during a period of thirty years, the sun of royalty, little by little, was shorn of its beams—how first one Governor-General and then another resisted the proud pretensions of the Mogul, and lopped off some of the ceremonial obeisances which had so long maintained the inflated dignity of the House of Timour.* All these humiliations rankled in the minds of the inmates of the Palace; but they were among the necessities of the continually advancing supremacy of the English. It may be questioned whether a single man, to whose opinion any weight of authority can fairly be attached, has ever doubted the wisdom of these excisions. And humanity might well pause to consider whether more might not yet be done to mitigate that great evil of rotting royalty which had so long polluted the atmosphere of Delhi. That gigantic Palace, almost a city in itself, had long been the

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* It was not until 1835, that the current coin of India ceased to bear the superscription of the Mogul emperors, and the "Company's rupee" was substituted for it.

1806—37. home of manifold abominations; and a Christian Government had suffered, and was still suffering, generation after generation of abandoned men and degraded women, born in that vast sty of refuge, to be a curse to others and to themselves. In subdued official language, it was said of these wretched members of a Royal House, that they were "independent of all law, immersed in idleness and profligacy, and indifferent to public opinion."* It might have been said, without a transgression of the truth, that the recesses of the Palace were familiar with the commission of every crime known in the East, and that Heaven alone could take account of that tremendous catalogue of iniquities.

1837.

Behaudur Shah.

On the evening of the 28th of September, 1837, Akbar Shah died, at the age of eighty-two. He had intrigued some years before to set aside the succession of the Heir-Apparent in behalf of a favourite son; but he had failed.† And now Prince Aboo Zuffer, in the official language of the day, "ascended the throne, assuming the title of Abool Mozuffer Surajoodeen Mahomed Behaudur Shah Padshah-i-Gazee." It is sufficient that he should be known here by the name of Behaudur Shah. He was then far advanced in age; but he was of a long-lived family, and his three-score years had not pressed heavily upon him. He was supposed to be a quiet, inert man, fond of poetry, a poetaster himself; and not at all addicted, by nature, to political intrigue. If he had any prominent characteristic it was avarice. He had not long succeeded to the title

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* Sometimes, however, great crimes were punished. Prince Hyder Shekoh, for example, was executed for the murder of his wife.

† Indeed, he had made two separate efforts, in favour first of one son, then of another. The first endeavour was attended with some eventful circumstances which might have led to violence and bloodshed.

1837.

Sir Charles Metcalfe.

Lord Auckland.

before he began to press for an addition to the royal stipend, which had in some sort been promised to Akbar Shah. The Lieutenant-Governor was unwilling to recommend such a waste of the public money; but the Governor-General, equally believing it to be wasteful, said that, although as a new question he would have negatived it, the promise having been given it ought to be fulfilled—but upon the original conditions. These conditions were, that the King should execute a formal renunciation of all further claims upon the British Government; but Behaudur Shah did as his father had done before him. He refused to subscribe to the proposed conditions, and continued to cherish a belief that, by sending an agent to England, he might obtain what he sought without any embarrassing restrictions.

Rammohun Roy.

Akbar Shah had employed as his representative the celebrated Brahmin, Rammohun Roy, and ever still regarding himself as the fountain of honour, had conferred on his envoy the title of Rajah. English society recognised it, as it would have recognised a still higher title, assumed by a Khitmudgar; but the authorities refused their official recognition to the Rajahship, though they paid becoming respect to the character of the man, who was striving to enlighten the Gentiles, as a social and religious reformer. As the envoy of the Mogul he accomplished nothing; and Behaudur Shah found that the "case" was much in the same state as it had been when Rammohun Roy left India on the business of the late King. But he had still faith in the efficacy of a mission to England, especially if conducted by an Englishman. So when he heard that an eloquent lecturer, who had gained a great reputation in the Western world by his earnest advocacy of the rights

George Thompson.

1843. of the coloured races, had come to India, Behaudur Shah invited him to Delhi, and was eager to enlist his services. He had many supposed wrongs to be redressed. Lord Ellenborough had given the finishing stroke to the system of nuzzur-giving, or tributary present-making, to the King, by prohibiting even such offerings by the Resident.* Thus had passed away almost the last vestige of that recognition, by the British Government, of the imperial dignity of the House of Timour; and although money-compensation had been freely given for the loss, the change rankled in the mind of the King. But the Company had already refused to grant any increase of stipend to the Royal Family until the prescribed conditions had been accepted;† and Mr. George Thompson had no more power than Rammohun Roy to cause a relaxation of the decision. And in truth, there was no sufficient reason why the stipend should be increased. A lakh of rupees a month was sufficient, on a broad basis of generosity, even for that multitudinous family; and it would have been profligate to throw away more money on the mock-royalty of Delhi, when it might be so much better bestowed.‡

There was, indeed, no ground of complaint against

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* Nuzzurs had formerly been presented by the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief—by the latter, it would seem, as recently as 1837, on the accession of Shah Behaudur.—See Letter of the Government of India, May 23, 1838. And in the cold season of 1842-3 Lord Ellenborough's secretaries presented nuzzurs to the King, without any intimation to the Governor-General; who, on learning what they had done, was surprised and indignant in the extreme, and put a stop to the nuzzur-giving for ever. Mr. William Edwardes, one of the secretaries concerned, has given an interesting account of the affair, which will be found in the Appendix.

† Letter of the Court of Directors, Feb. 11, 1846: "It being impossible for us to waive this condition (of executing a formal renunciation of all further claims) the King must be considered as having declined the offered benefit."

‡ In addition to this monthly lakh of rupees, paid in money, Behaudur Shah continued to enjoy the proceeds of some crown lands, and also of some ground-rents in the city.—See evidence of Mr. Sanders at the King's trial: "He was in receipt of a stipend of one lakh of rupees per

1843—9. Zenana intrigue.

the British Government; and, perhaps, the King would have subsided into a state, if not of absolute content, of submissive quietude, if it had not been for that activity of Zenana intrigue, which no Oriental sovereign, with nothing to do but to live, can ever hope to resist. He had married a young wife, who had borne him a son, and who had become a favourite, potential for good or evil. As often it has happened, from the time of the patriarchs downwards, this son of his old age also became a favourite; and the King was easily wrought upon by Queen Zeemut Mehal to endeavour to set aside the succession of the heir-apparent in favour of the boy-prince. The unjust supercession, which his father had endeavoured to perpetrate against him, might now some day be put in force by himself, for the gratification of his favourite. But it was necessary in such a case to walk warily. Any rash hasty action might be followed by a failure which could never be repaired. In any case, it would be better to wait until the child, Jewan Bukht, were a few years older, and he could be extolled as a youth of promise. Meanwhile the great Chapter of Accidents might contain something in their favour. So hanging on to the skirts of Circumstance, he watched for the coming of an opportunity. And ere long the opportunity came—bringing with it more than had been looked for, and not all to the satisfaction of the royal expectants.

1849. The story of the succession.

The story may be briefly told. In 1849, Prince

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mensem, of which ninety-nine thousand were paid at Delhi, and one thousand at Lucknow, to the members of the family there. He was also in receipt of revenue to the amount of a lakh and a half from the crown lands in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He also received a considerable sum from the ground-rents of houses and tenants in the city of Delhi."

1849. Dara Bukht, the Heir-Apparent, died. At this time the King, Behaudur Shah, had numbered more than seventy years. In natural course his death could be no very remote contingency. The question of succession, therefore, pressed heavily on the mind of the Governor-General. Lord Dalhousie was not a man to regard with much favour the mock sovereignty of the Mogul. Others before him, with greater tenderness for ancient dynastic traditions, had groaned over the long continuance of a state of things at which reason and truth revolted; and the extinction of the titular dignity of the Kings of Delhi, after the death of Behaudur Shah, had been urged upon the Government of the East India Company.* But the proposal stirred up divisions in the Council-Chamber of Leadenhall, which resulted in delayed action. The usual expedient of waiting for further advices from India was resorted to, and so Lord Dalhousie found the question unsettled. The death of Prince Dara Bukht afforded an opportunity for its settlement, which a Governor-General of Dalhousie's temperament was not likely to neglect. The next in succession, according to Mahomedan law, was Prince Fakir-ood-deen, a man thirty years of age, reputed to be of quick parts, fond of European society, and tolerant of the British Government. And the Governor-General saw both in the character of the man and the circumstances of his position that which might favour and facilitate the changes which he wisely desired to introduce. 1849.

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* Writing on the 1st of August, 1844, the Court of Directors observed: "The Governor-General has given directions to the Agent that, in the event of the demise of the King of Delhi, no step whatever shall be taken which can be construed into a recognition of the descent of that title to a successor without specific authority from the Governor-General. If in these instructions the abolition of the title is contemplated, we cannot give it our sanction until we have heard further from you on the subject, and have had time to consider the purport and the grounds of the recommendation which may be offered."

Lord Dalhousie's measures.

It was manifestly the duty of the British Government not to perpetuate a state of things which had nothing but tradition to gloss over its offensive deformity. But the operation that had become necessary was not one to be performed violently and abruptly, without regard to times and seasons. Feeling sure that the opportunity could not be far distant, Lord Dalhousie had been contented to wait. It had now come. Prince Dara Bukht was the last of the Delhi Princes who had been "born in the purple." He had been reared and he had ripened in the expectation of succeeding to the Kingship of Delhi; and there might have been some hardship, if not a constructive breach of faith, in destroying the hopes of a lifetime at the very point of fruition. But Prince Fakir-ood-deen had been born a pensioner. He had no recollection of "the time when the King of Delhi still sat on the throne and was recognised as the paramount potentate in India." It could, therefore, be no injustice to him to admit his accession to the chiefship of the family upon other conditions than those which had been recognised in the case of his father; whilst it was, in the opinion of the Governor-General, sound policy, on the other hand, to sweep away all the privileges and prerogatives which had kept alive this great pretentious mock-royalty in the heart of our Empire.

The evils to be removed were many; but two among them were more glaring than the rest. The perpetuation of the kingly title was a great sore. Lord Dalhousie did not overrate its magnitude. Perhaps, indeed, he scarcely took in its true proportions. For he wrote that the Princes of India and

1849. its people, whatever they might once have been, had become "entirely indifferent to the condition of the King or his position."[*] And he added: "The British Government has become indeed and in truth the paramount Sovereign in India. It is not expedient that there should be, even in name, a rival in the person of a Sovereign whose ancestors once held the paramountcy we now possess. His existence could never really endanger us, I admit; although the intrigues of which he might, and not unfrequently has been made the nucleus, might incommode and vex us." I have said before that Lord Dalhousie "could not understand the tenacity with which the natives of India cling to their old traditions—could not sympathise with the veneration which they felt for their ancient dynasties."[†] Time might have weakened the veneration felt for the House of Delhi, but had not, assuredly, effaced it. There was still sufficient vitality in it to engender, under favouring circumstances, something more than discomfort and vexation. But Lord Dalhousie erred only in thus under-estimating the proportions of the evil which he now desired to remove. He was not, on that account, less impressed with the fact that it would be grievous impolicy on the part of the British Government to suffer the kingly title, on the death of Behaudur Shah, to pass to another generation.

The other evil thing of which I have spoken was the maintenance of the Palace as a royal residence. Regarded in the aspect of morality and humanity, as already observed, it was an abomination of the worst kind. But, more clearly even than this, Lord Dalhousie discerned the political and military disadvantages of the existing state of things, by which, what was in reality a great fortress in the hands of a possible enemy, was suffered to command the chief arsenal of Upper India. "Here," wrote the Governor-General, "we have a strong fortress in the heart of one of the principal cities of our Empire, and in entire command of the chief magazine of the Upper Provinces—which lies so exposed, both to assault and to the dangers arising from the carelessness of the people dwelling around it—that it is a matter of surprise that no accident has yet occurred to it. Its dangerous position has been frequently remarked upon, and many schemes have been prepared for its improvement and defence; but the only eligible one is the transfer of the stores into the Palace, which would then be kept by us as a British post, capable of maintaining itself against any hostile manœuvre, instead of being, as it now is, the source of positive danger, and perhaps not unfrequently the focus of intrigues against our power."* 1849.

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[*] Minute, February 10, 1849.

[†] *Ante*, vol. i. p. 356.

There was undoubted wisdom in this. To remove

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* It does not appear, however, that Lord Dalhousie laid any stress upon the fact that no European troops were posted in Delhi. Nor, indeed, did Sir Charles Napier, who at this time was Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India. He saw clearly that the military situation was a false one, and he wrote much about the defence of the city, but without drawing any distinction between European and Native troops. In both cases the anticipated danger was from a rising of the people, not of the soldiery. With respect to the situation of the magazine, Sir Charles Napier wrote to the Governor-General (Lahore, Dec. 15, 1849), saying: "As regards the magazine, the objections to it are as follows: 1st. It is placed in a very populous part of the city, and its explosion would be very horrible in its effects as regards the destruction of life. 2nd. It would destroy the magnificent palace of Delhi. 3rd. The loss of Government property would also be very great, especially if my views of the importance of Delhi, given in my report, be acted upon; namely, that it and Dinapore should be two great magazines for the Bengal Presidency. 4th. It is without defence beyond what the guard of fifty men offer, and its gates are so weak that a mob could push them in. I therefore think a powder magazine should be built in a safe place. There is a strong castle three or four miles from the town which would answer well, but I fear the repairs would be too expensive; more so, perhaps, than what would be more efficacious, viz., to build a magazine in a suitable position near the city."

1849. the Delhi Family from the Palace, and to abolish all their Alsatian privileges, upon the death of Behaudur Shah, could have been no very difficult work. But to Lord Dalhousie it appeared that this part of the duty which lay before him should be accomplished with the least possible delay. He conceived that there would be no necessity to wait for the demise of the titular sovereign, as in all probability the King might be persuaded to vacate the Palace, if sufficient inducement were held out to him. He argued that, as the Kings of Delhi had possessed a convenient and favourite country residence at the Kootab, some twelve miles to the south of Delhi, and that as the place was held in great veneration, generally and particularly, as the burial-place of a noted Mahomedan saint and of some of the ancestors of Behaudur Shah, his Majesty and the Royal Family were not likely to object to their removal, and, if they did object, it was to be considered whether pressure might not be put upon them, and their consent obtained by the extreme measure of withholding the royal stipend. But the representative of a long line of Kings might not unreasonably have demurred to the expulsion of his Family from the old home of his fathers, and it demanded no great exercise of imagination to comprehend the position.

Views of the Home Government. When this exposition of Lord Dalhousie's views was laid before the Court of Directors of the East India Company, the subject was debated with much interest in Leadenhall-street.* Already had the strong mind of the Governor-General begun to influence the councils of the Home Government of India. There were one or two able and active members of

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* Sir Archibald Galloway, who had taken part in the defence of Delhi at the commencement of the century, was Chairman of the East India Company.

1849.

the Court who believed implicitly in him, and were resolute to support everything that he did. There was another section of the Court, which had no special faith in Lord Dalhousie, but which, upon system, supported the action of the local Governments, as the least troublesome means of disposing of difficult questions. But there was a third and powerful party —powerful in intellect, more powerful still in its unflinching honesty and candour, and its inalienable sense of justice — and this party prevailed. The result was that the majority agreed to despatch instructions to India, negativing the proposals of the Governor-General. But when the draft went from Leadenhall-street to Cannon-row, it met with determined opposition from the Board of Control, over which at that time Sir John Hobhouse presided.* It was contended that the British Government were not pledged to continue to Shah Allum's successors the privileges accorded to him, and that the Court had not proved that the proposals of the Governor-General were either unjust or impolitic. Then arose one of those sharp conflicts between the Court and the Board which in the old days of the Double Government sometimes broke in upon the monotony of their Councils. The Court rejoined that the proposals were those of the Governor-General alone, that the concurrence of his Council had not been obtained, that the contemplated measures were ungenerous and unwise,† and that it would give grievous offence to the

Conflict between the Court and the Board.

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* Mr. James Wilson and the Hon. John Eliot were then Secretaries to the Board.

† "The question," they said, "is not one of supremacy. The supremacy of the British power is beyond dispute. The sovereignty of Delhi is a title utterly powerless for injury, but respected by Mahomedans as an ancient honour of their name, and their good feelings are conciliated to the British Government by

1849. Mahomedan population of the country. They were prepared to sanction persuasive means to obtain the evacuation of the Palace, but they most strongly objected to compulsion. The Board then replied that it was not necessary in such a case to obtain the consent of the Members of Council, and that if they had felt any alarm as to the results of the proposed measure, they would have communicated their apprehensions to the Court (which, however, was a mistaken impression)—that there was no sort of obligation to continue to the successors of Shah Allum what Lord Wellesley had granted to him—that it was a question only of policy, and that as to the effect of the proposed measure on the minds of the Mahomedans, the local ruler was a better judge than the Directors at home (and this, perhaps, was another mistake); but when the Indian minister added: "The chance of danger to the British Empire from the head of the House of Timour may be infinitely small; but if a Mahomedan should ever think that he required such a rallying-point for the purpose of infusing into those of his own faith spirit and bitterness in an attack on Christian supremacy, he would surely find that a Prince already endowed with the regal title, and possessed of a royal residence, was a more efficient instrument in his hands than one placed in the less conspicuous position contemplated by Lord Dalhousie and his advisers," he spoke wisely and presciently. On receipt of this letter, the Court again

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the respect it shows for that ancient honour. The entire indifference of the Princes and the people of India to the condition or position of the King is alleged; but the Court cannot think it possible that any people can ever become indifferent to the memory of its former greatness. The traditional deference with which that memory is regarded is altogether distinct from any hopes of its renewal. But it is a feeling which it is impolitic to wound. From mere hopelessness of resistance it may not immediately show itself, but may remain latent till other causes of public danger may bring it into action."

returned to the conflict, urging that they felt so deeply the importance of the subject that they could not refrain from making a further appeal to the Board. They combated what had been said about the implied concurrence of the Council, and the argument against the claims of the Delhi Family based upon the action of Lord Wellesley, and then they proceeded to speak again of the feelings of the Mahomedan population. "The amount of disaffection," they said, "in the Mahomedan population, which the particular measure, if carried into effect, may produce, is a matter of opinion on which the means do not exist of pronouncing confidently. The evil may prove less than the Court apprehend, or it may be far greater than they would venture to predict. But of this they are convinced, that even on the most favourable supposition, the measure would be considered throughout India as evidence of the commencement of a great change in our policy." "The Court," it was added, "cannot contemplate without serious uneasiness the consequences which may arise from such an impression, should it go forth generally throughout India—firmly believing that such an act would produce a distrust which many years of an opposite policy would be insufficient to remove." Then, having again entreated most earnestly the Board's reconsideration of their decision, they concluded by saying, that if they failed, they would "still have discharged their duty to themselves, by disclaiming all responsibility for a measure which they regarded as unjust towards the individual family, gratuitously offensive to an important portion of our Indian subjects, and calculated to produce an effect on the reputation and influence of the British Government both in India and elsewhere, such as 1849.

1849. they would deeply deplore." But the last appeal fell on stony ground. The Board were obdurate. They deplored the difference of opinion, accepted the disclaimer, and, on the last day of the year, directed, "according to the powers vested in them by the law," a despatch to be sent to India in the form settled by the Board. So instructions were sent out to India, signed ministerially by certain members of the Court, totally opposed to what, as a body, they believed to be consistent with policy and justice.

December 31 1849.

Summary of the argument.

On full consideration of this correspondence, conducted as it was, on both sides, with no common ability, it is difficult to resist the conviction that both were right and both were wrong—right in what they asserted, wrong in what they denied. It was, in truth, but a choice of evils that lay before the double Government; but each half of it erred in denying the existence of the dangers asserted by the other. Much, of course, on both sides was conjecture or speculation, to be tested by the great touchstone of the Future; and it depended on the more rapid or the more tardy ripening of events on the one side or the other to demonstrate the greater sagacity of the Court or the Board. If there should be no popular excitement before the death of Behaudur Shah, to make the King of Delhi, in his great palatial stronghold, a rallying-point for a disaffected people, that event, followed by the abolition of the title and the removal of the Family from the Palace, might prove the soundness of the Court's arguments, by evoking a Mahomedan outbreak; but, if there should be a Mahomedan, or any other popular outbreak, during the lifetime of Behaudur Shah, it might be shown, by the alacrity of the people to rally round the old imperial throne, and to proclaim again the sovereignty of the House

1849. of Timour, that the apprehensions of the Board had not been misplaced, and that the danger on which they had enlarged was a real one. There was equal force at the time in the arguments of both, but there was that in the womb of the Future which was destined to give the victory to the Board.

1850. Measures deferred. Lord Dalhousie received the instructions bearing the official signatures of the Court in the early spring of 1850;* but he had before learnt in what a hot-bed of contention the despatch was being reared, and when it came, he wisely hesitated to act upon its contents. It is to his honour that, on full consideration, he deferred to the opinions expressed by the majority of the Court, and by others not in the Court, whose opinions were entitled to equal respect. "The Honourable Court," he said, "have conveyed to the Governor-General in Council full authority to carry these measures into effect. But I have, for some time past, been made aware through different channels, that the measures I have thus proposed regard-

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* Some powerful protests were recorded by members of the Court—among others by Mr. Tucker, then nearly eighty years of age. In this paper he said: "That they (the Delhi family) can be induced voluntarily to abandon their palace, I cannot, for one moment, believe. The attachment of the natives generally to the seats of their ancestors, however humble, is well known to all those who know anything of the people of India; but in this case there are peculiar circumstances, the cherished associations of glory, the memory of past grandeur, which must render the palace of Delhi the object of attachment and veneration to the fallen family. . . . If the object is to be accomplished, it must be by the exertion of military force, or intimidation disgraceful to any Government, and calculated to bring odium on the British name." "I have the highest respect," he said, "for the talents, the great acquirements, and the public spirit of Lord Dalhousie; but I must think that an individual, who has only communicated with the people of India through an interpreter, cannot have acquired a very intimate knowledge of the character, habits, feelings, and prejudices of the people." The veteran director erred, however, in making light of the strength of Delhi as a fortified city. "It is not," he said, "a fortress of any strength. . . . . It has been repeatedly entered and sacked by undisciplined hordes." "There is, in fact," he continued, "no ground for assuming that Delhi can become a military post of importance, especially now that we have advanced our frontier to the banks of the Indus."

1850. ing the throne of Delhi, have not met with the concurrence of authorities in England whose long experience and knowledge of Indian affairs entitle their opinions to great weight, and that many there regard the tendency of these proposed measures with anxiety, if not with alarm." He added that, with unfeigned deference to the opinions thus expressed, he still held the same views as before; but that, although his convictions remained as strong as ever, he did not consider the measures themselves to be of such immediate urgency as to justify his carrying them into effect, "contrary to declared opinions of undoubted weight and authority, or in a manner calculated to create uneasiness and doubt." He was willing, therefore, to suspend action, and, in the mean while, to invite the opinions of his Council, which had not been before recorded.

Palace intrigues.

Whilst the main questions thus indicated were under consideration, another difficulty of a personal character arose. The King protested against the succession of Fakir-ood-deen. Stimulated by his favourite wife, Zeenut-Mehal, he pleaded earnestly for her son, then a boy of eleven. One objection which he raised to the succession of his eldest surviving son was a curious one. He said that it was a tradition of his House, since the time of Timour, that no one was to sit on the throne who had been in any way mutilated; Fakir-ood-deen had been circumcised, and, therefore, he was disqualified.* The objection was

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* The statement was an exaggerated one—as all the Mogul Emperors, up to the time of Hoomayoon, were circumcised. After the accession of this prince, for reasons given in a very interesting note, at the end of the volume, furnished by my learned friend, Moulavee Syud Ahmed, C.S.I., the rite was discontinued, generally, in the family. But for certain physical reasons, an exception was made, with respect to Fakir-ood-deen, and Zeenut-Mehal siezed upon the pretext.

1850.

urged with much vehemence, and, it was added, that Fakir-ood-deen was a man of bad character. The immediate effect of these representations was that Lord Dalhousie determined for a while to suspend official action with respect to the question of succession, and to see what circumstances might develop in his favour.

Opinions of the Council.

In the mean time he invited the opinions of his colleagues in the Supreme Council. It consisted, at that time, of Sir Frederick Currie, Sir John Littler, an old Company's officer of good repute, and Mr. John Lowis, a Bengal civilian, blameless in all official and personal relations, one of the lights of the Service, steady but not brilliant. The first shrewdly observed that we might leave the choice of a successor until the King's death, which could not be very remote, and that we might then easily make terms with, or impose conditions upon, the accepted candidate, for the evacuation of the Palace. The General looked doubtfully at the whole proposal. He believed that the Mahomedan population of India still regarded with reverence the old Mogul Family, and would be incensed by its humiliation. He counselled, therefore, caution and delay, and in the end persuasion, not compulsion. But John Lowis laughed all this to scorn. He did not believe that the Mahomedans of India cared anything about Delhi, or anything about the King; and if they did care, that, he said, was an additional reason why the title should be abolished, and the Palace vacated, with the least possible delay.*

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* "But, if these fears are not groundless, surely they afford a positive reason for taking the proposed step, because the result anticipated, as it appears to me, can arise only if the Mahomedans (no doubt the most restless and discontented of our subjects) have continued to look upon the representatives of the House of Timour as their natural head, and to

1850.

The result of these deliberations was that a despatch was sent to England, recommending that affairs should remain unchanged during the lifetime of the present King—that the Prince Fakir-ood-deen should be acknowledged as successor to the royal title, but that advantage should be taken of the pretensions of a rival claimant to the titular dignity, to obtain the desired concessions from the acknowledged Head of the Family—that inducements should be held out to him to leave the Palace and to reside in the Kootab, and that, if necessary, this advantage should be purchased by the grant of an additional stipend.

Agreement with the Heir-Apparent.

To all the recommendations of the Governor-General—so far as they concern this history—the Home Government yielded their consent. Permission was then granted to the Delhi Agent to make known to Prince Fakir-ood-deen, at a confidential interview, what were the intentions and wishes of the British Government. A meeting, therefore, took place between the Prince and Sir Thomas Metcalfe; and the former expressed himself, according to official reports, prepared to accede to the wishes of the Government, "if invested with the title of King, and permitted to assume the externals of royalty." An agreement was then drawn up, signed, sealed, and witnessed, and the work was done. It was, doubtless, pleasant to the authorities to think that the heir had acceded willingly to all the demands made upon him. But the fact is that he consented to them with intense disgust, and that throughout the Palace there were great consternation and excitement, and that no one

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count upon the Palace of Delhi as a rallying point in the event of any outbreak amongst them. If it be so, it is surely sound policy, on the first favourable opportunity, to remove the head, and to put the projected rallying point into safe hands."

was more vexed than the mother of the rival claimant, Queen Zeenut-Mehal.

1856.

Death of Fakir-ood-deen.

I must pass hastily over the next two or three years, during which the animosities of the Queen Zeenut-Mehal, and of her son, Jewan Bakht, continued to fester under the irritations of a great disappointment. And ere long they were aggravated by the thought of a new grievance; for the King had endeavoured in vain to induce the British Government to pledge itself to make to his favourites, after his death, the same payments as he had settled upon them during his life. The intrigues which, if successful, would have secured to them so much at the expense of others, altogether failed. But the King lived on—lived to survive the heir whose succession was so distasteful to him. On the 10th of July, 1856, Prince Fakir-ood-deen suddenly died. It was more than suspected that he had been poisoned. He was seized with deadly sickness and vomiting, after partaking of a dish of curry. Extreme prostration and debility ensued, and although the King's physican, Ahsan-oollah, was called in, he could or would do nothing to restore the dying Prince; and in a little time there were lamentations in the Heir-Apparent's house, and tidings were conveyed to the Palace that Fakir-ood-deen was dead.*

How that night was spent in the apartments of

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* The Palace Diary of the day says: "Having felt hungry, the Prince imagined that an empty stomach promoted bile, and partook of some bread with curry gravy, when immediately the vomitings increased, which produced great debility. Every remedy to afford relief proved ineffectual, and H.R.H. rapidly sunk. Meerza Elahee Buksh sent for Hakim Assan-oolah to prescribe. The Hakim administered a clyster, which, however, did no good. At six o'clock, the Heir Apparent was in a moribund state, and immediately after the noise of lamentation was heard in the direction of the Heir-Apparent's residence, and news was brought to the Palace of H.R.H.'s demise. His Majesty expressed his sorrow. The Newab Zeenut-Mehal Begum condoled with his Majesty."

1856. Queen Zeenut-Mehal can only be conjectured. Judged by its results, it must have been a night of stirring intrigue and excited activity. For when, on the following day, Sir Thomas Metcalfe waited on the King, his Majesty put into the hands of the Agent a paper containing a renewed expression of his desire to see the succession of Jewan Bakht recognised by the British Government. Enclosed was a document purporting to convey a request from others of the King's sons, that the offspring of Zeenut-Mehal, being endowed with "wisdom, merit, learning, and good manners," should take the place of the Heir-Apparent. Eight of the royal princes attached their seals to this address. But the eldest of the survivors —Meerza Korash by name—next day presented a memorial of his own, in which he set forth that his brethren had been induced to sign the paper by promises of increased money-allowances from the King, if they consented, and deprivation of income if they refused. An effort also was made to bribe Meerza Korash into acquiescence. He professed all filial loyalty to the King; declared his willingness to accede, as Heir-Apparent, to such terms as the King might suggest; but when he found that his father, instigated by the Queen Zeenut-Mehal, was bent on setting him aside altogether, he felt that there was nothing left for him but an appeal to the British Government. "As in this view," he wrote to the British Agent, "my ruin and birthright are involved, I deem it proper to represent my case, hoping that in your report due regard will be had to all the above circumstances. Besides being senior, I have accomplished a pilgrimage to Mecca, and have learned by heart the Koran; and my further attainments can be tested in an interview."

1856.

Views of Lord Canning.

By this time Lord Canning had succeeded to the Governor-Generalship, and a new Council sate beside him. The whole question of the Delhi succession, therefore, was considered and debated by men uninfluenced by any foregone expressions of opinion. In truth, the question was not a difficult one. The course which Lord Dalhousie meant to pursue was apparently the wisest course; although he had erred in believing that the Mahomedans of Upper India had no lingering affection for the sovereignty of the House of Delhi; and not less in supposing that the removal of the King and the Royal Family from the Palace in the city would not be painful and humiliating to them. But, with laudable forbearance, he had yielded to the opinions of others, even with the commission in his hands to execute his original designs. Lord Canning, therefore, found the Delhi question unsettled and undetermined in many of the most essential points. Bringing a new eye to the contemplation of the great danger and the great abomination of the Delhi Palace, he saw both, perhaps, even in larger dimensions than they had presented to the eye of his predecessor. He did not, therefore, hesitate to adopt as his own the views which Lord Dalhousie had recorded with respect to the removal of the Family on the death of Behaudur Shah. "It is as desirable as ever," he wrote, "that the Palace of Delhi—which is, in fact, the citadel of a large fortified town, and urgently required for military purposes—should be in the hands of the Government of the country, and that the pernicious privilege of exemption from the law, which is conceded to the Crown connexions and dependants of the King now congregated there, should, in the interests of morality and good government, cease." It was scarcely possible,

1856. indeed, that much difference of opinion could obtain among statesmen with respect to the political and military expediency of placing this great fortified building, which dominated the city of Delhi, in the secure possession of British troops; nor could there be any doubt in the mind of a Christian man that, in the interests of humanity, we were bound to pull down all those screens and fences which had so long shut out the abominations of the Palace from the light of day, and excluded from its murky recesses the saving processes of the law.

But the extinction of the titular sovereignty was still an open question. Lord Canning had spent only a few months in India, and those few months had been passed in Calcutta. He had no personal knowledge of the feelings of the princes or people of Upper India; but he read in the minutes of preceding members of the Government that the traditions of the House of Timour had become faint in men's minds, if they had not been wholly effaced; and he argued that if there was force in this when written, there must be greater force after a lapse of years, as there was an inevitable tendency in time to obliterate such memories. "The reasons," he said, "which induced a change of purpose in 1850 are not fully on record;* but whatever they may have been, the course of time has assuredly strengthened the arguments by which the first intentions were supported, and possibly has removed the objection to it." He further argued that as much had already been done to strip the mock majesty of Delhi of the purple and gold with which it had once been bedizened—that as first one privilege and then another, which had pampered the pride of the descendants of Timour, had been torn from them, there could be little difficulty in putting the finishing stroke to the work by abolishing the kingly title on the death of Behaudur Shah. "The presents," he said, "which were at one time offered to the King by the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief have been discontinued. The privilege of a coinage carrying his mark is now denied to him. The Governor-General's seal no longer bears a device of vassalage; and even the Native chiefs have been prohibited from using one. It has been determined that these appearances of subordination and dependence could not be kept up consistently with a due respect for the real and solid power of the British Government, and the same may be said of the title of King of Delhi, with the fiction of paramount sovereignty which attaches to it. . . . To recognise the title of King, and a claim to the external marks of royalty in a new person would be an act purely voluntary on the part of the Government of India, and quite uncalled for. Moreover, it would not be accepted as a grace or favour by any but the individual himself. But," added the Governor-General, "whatever be the degree of rank inherited, the heir whom in right and consistency the Government must recognise, is the eldest surving son of the King, Prince Mirza Mahomed Korash, who has no claims from early reminiscences to see the unreal dignity of his House sustained for another generation in his own person." 1856.

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* That is, not on record in India. The reasons are fully stated above; but Lord Canning apparently did not know that the "Court's despatch" was really not their despatch at all.

The policy to be observed having thus been determined, the Governor-General, with the full concurrence of his Council, proceeded to issue definite in-

1856. structions for the guidance of his Agent. The substance of them is thus stated:

"1. Should it be necessary to send a reply to the King's letter, the Agent must inform his Majesty that the Governor-General cannot sanction the recognition of Mirza Jewan Bakht as successor.

"2. Mirza Mahomed Korash must not be led to expect that his recognition will take place on the same terms as Fakir-ood-deen's, and that during the King's lifetime no communication is to be made, either to his Majesty, or to any other member of the family, touching the succession.

"3. On the King's demise, Prince Mirza Mahomed Korash should be informed that Government recognise him as the head of the family upon the same conditions as those accorded to Prince Mirza Fakir-ood-deen, excepting that, instead of the title of King, he should be designated and have the title of Shahzada, and that this communication should be made to him not in the way of writing, negotiation, or bargaining, which it is not the intention of the Governor-General in Council to admit, but as the declaration of the mature and fixed determination of the Government of India.

"4. A report to be made of the number of the privileged residents in the Palace; to how many the privilege would extend, if the sons and grandsons, but no more distant relatives of any former King were admitted to it.

"5. The sum of fifteen thousand rupees per mensem from the family stipend to be fixed as the future assignment of the heir of the family."

Intrigues of Zeenut-Mehal.

Such, as represented by official documents—such as they were then known to Lord Canning—were the state and prospects of the Delhi Family at the close of the year 1856. But there was something besides reserved for later revelation to the English ruler, which may be recorded in this place. The King, stricken in years, would have been well content to end his days in quietude and peace. But the restless intriguing spirit of the Queen Zeenut-Mehal would not suffer the aged monarch to drowse out the remainder of his days. She never ceased to cling to the hope that she might still live to see the recognition of her son as King of Delhi, and she never ceased to intrigue, at home and abroad, by the light of that pole-star of her ambition. One impediment had been removed by death. Another might be removed in the same way. And if the British Government would not favour the claims of Jewan Bakht, other powerful Governments might be induced to hold out to him a helping hand. It was stated afterwards that the King had never resented the determination to exclude the Delhi Family from the Palace, as the exclusion would not affect himself, and he had no care for the interests of his successor.* But it has been shown that Queen Zeenut-Mehal was loud in her lamentations when it was known that Fakir-ood-deen had surrendered this ancient privilege; for although she hated the recognised heir, she knew that he was not immortal; and changes of Government, moreover, might beget changes of opinion. There was still hope of the succession of Jewan Bakht so long as the old King lived; and therefore she desired to maintain all the privileges of the Kingship unimpaired to the last possible moment of doubt and expectancy. 1856.

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* Evidence of Assan-oolah, on the trial of the King of Delhi.

1857. Meanwhile, the youth in whom all these hopes centred, was growing up with a bitter hatred of the English in his heart. The wisdom, the learning, the good manners of the Heir-expectant were evinced by the pertinacity with which he was continually spitting his venom at the English. He did not hesitate to say, even in the presence of British subjects, that "in a short time he would have all the English under his feet."* But his courage was not equal to his bitterness; for if he were asked what he meant by such language, he would answer that he meant nothing. He was "only in sport." He had been for years past imbibing this venom in the Zenana, under the traitorous tuition of his mother, and he was ever anxious to spit it out, especially in the presence of women.

To what extent the intrigues thus matured in the Queen's apartments may, by the help of her agents, have been made to ramify beyond the Palace walls, it is not easy to conjecture. There is no proof that in or about Delhi the question of succession was regarded with any interest by the people. It little mattered to them whether one Prince or another were recognised as the head of the Family and the recipient of the lion's share of the pension. If attempts were made to excite the popular feeling to manifest itself on the side of Jewan Bakht, they were clearly a failure. But there is at least some reason to think that the emissaries of the Palace had been assiduous in their efforts to stir into a blaze the smouldering fires of Mahomedan zeal, and to excite vague hopes of some great Avatar from the North-West, which would restore the fallen fortunes of the House of Delhi, and give again to the Mahomedans of India the wealth and honour of which they had been deprived by the usurpation of the English. 1857.

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* See the evidence of Mrs. Fleming, an English sergeant's wife, who thus recites an incident which occurred on the occasion of a visit paid by her to the Queen Zeenut-Mehal: "I was sitting down with his sister-in-law, and Jawan Bakht was standing by with his wife. My own daughter, Mrs. Scully, was also present. I was talking with Jawan Bakht's sister-in-law, when Mrs. Scully said to me, 'Mother, do you hear what this young rascal is saying? He is telling me that in a short time he will have all the infidel English under his feet, and after that he will kill the Hindus.' Hearing this I turned round to Jawan Bakht, and asked him, 'What is that you are saying?' He replied that he was only joking. I said if what you threaten were to be the case, your head would be taken off first. He told me that the Persians were coming to Delhi, and that when they did so, we, that is, myself and daughter, should go to him, and he would save us. After this he left us. I think this must have occurred about the middle of April, 1857."

State of feeling in Delhi.

So it happened that as the new year advanced there was unwonted excitement among the Mahomedans of Delhi. The Native newspapers teemed with vague hints of a something coming that was to produce great changes, resulting in the subversion of the power of the English. Exaggerated stories of the Persian war, and most mendacious statements of reverses sustained by the English, were freely circulated and volubly discussed. At one time it was said that the Persians had come down to Attock, and at another that they were in full march through the Bolan Pass. Then it was alleged that the real history of the war was, that the Shah of Persia had for five generations been accumulating munitions of war and heaping up treasure for the purpose of conquering India, and that the time had now come for action. Russia, it was said, had placed its immense resources freely at the disposal of the Shah. A thoroughly appointed army of nearly half a million of men, with immense supplies of military stores, had been sent to the aid of Persia; and if the regular military forces of the Czar were not sufficient, a large contingent of Russian police would be sent to reinforce them. There were eager speculations, too, as to the course that would be adopted by the French and the Ottoman Govern-

1857. ments. "Most people," it was declared in a Native newspaper, rejoicing in the name of the "Authentic News," "say that the King of France and the Emperor of Turkey will both side with the Persians." And it was added that the Russians were the real cause of the war; for, "using the Persians as a cloak, they intend to consummate their own designs by the conquest of Hindostan." Other writers affirmed that although Dost Mahomed, Ameer of Caubul, pretended to be the friend of the English, and took their money and their arms, he was prepared to turn both against the infidels and to cast in his lot with Persia. Alike in the Bazaars and in the Lines—in the shops of the money-changers and in the vestibules of the Palace—these stories excited vague sensations of wonder and of awe, which were strengthened by the circulation of the prophecy, which took different shapes, but pointed in all to the same result, that when the English had ruled in India for a hundred years they would be driven out, and a Native dynasty restored.*

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* See the following, written by Sir James Outram in January, 1858: "What amazing statements and opinions one hears both in India and in England. What can be more ridiculous than the cry that the rebellion was caused by the annexation of Oude, or that it was solely a military mutiny?" [This, it should be observed, is addressed to Mr. Mangles.] "Our soldiers have deserted their standards and fought against us, but rebellion did not originate with the Sepoys. The rebellion was set on foot by the Mahomedans, and that long before we rescued Oude from her oppressors. It has been ascertained that prior to that Mussulman fanatics traversed the land, reminding the faithful that it had been foretold in prophecy that a foreign nation would rule in India a hundred years, after which the true believers would regain their ascendancy. When the century elapsed, the Mussulmans did their best to establish the truth of their prophet's declaration, and induced the Hindoo Sepoys, ever, as you know, the most credulous and silly of mankind, to raise the green standard, and forswear their allegiance, on the ground that we had determined to make the whole of India involuntary converts to Christianity." As to the text of the prediction, a native newspaper, citing it as the prophecy of the "revered saint, Shah Mamat-oollah" puts it in these words, the original of which are in verse: "After the fire-worshippers and Christians shall have held sway over the whole of

1857.
Warnings.

That the King was intriguing with the Shah of Persia was reported in the month of March to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces by a Native correspondent, who added: "In the Palace, but more especially in the portion of it constituting the personal apartments of the King, the subject of conversation, night and day, is the early arrival of the Persians.* Hassan Askari† has, moreover, impressed the King with the belief that he has learned, through a divine revelation, that the dominion of the King of Persia will to a certainty extend to Delhi, or rather over the whole of Hindustan, and that the splendour of the sovereignty of Delhi will again revive, as the sovereign of Persia will bestow the crown upon the King. Throughout the Palace, but particularly to the King, this belief has been the cause of great rejoicing, so much so, that prayers are offered and vows are made, whilst, at the same time, Hassan Askari has entered upon the daily performance, at an hour and a half before sunset, of a course of propitiatory ceremonies to expedite the arrival of the Persians and the expulsion of the Christians."

This warning was of course disregarded. A rooted confidence in our own strength and security, and a haughty contempt for the machinations of others, was at that time a condition of English statesmanship. It was the rule—and I fear that it is still the rule—in such a case to discern only the exaggerations and

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Hindostan for a hundred years, and when injustice and oppression shall prevail in their Government, an Arab prince shall be born, who will ride forth triumphantly to slay them."

* It was stated, however, in evidence on the King's trial, that the war with Persia had excited very little interest in the Palace. Assanoolah, the King's physician, said, that the native newspapers, coming into the Palace, reported the progress of the war, but that "the King never seemed to evince any marked interest one way or the other."

† This man was a Mahomedan Priest of the Hereditary Priesthood, who dwelt near the Delhi Gate of the Palace, and was ever active in encouraging intrigues with Persia.

1857. absurdities with which such statements are crusted over. The British officer to whom such revelations are made sees at a glance all that is preposterous and impossible in them; and he dismisses them as mere follies. He will not suffer himself to see that there may be grave and significant truths beneath the outer crust of wild exaggeration. When, therefore, Lieutenant-Governor Colvin received the letter announcing that the King of Delhi was intriguing with the Shah of Persia, and that the latter would ere long restore the monarchy of the Mogul, he laughed the absurdity to scorn, and pigeon-holed it among the curiosities of his administration. He did not consider that the simple fact of such a belief being rife in Delhi and the neighbourhood was something not to be disregarded. It in reality very little mattered whether the King of Delhi and the Shah of Persia were or were not in communication with each other, so long as the Mahomedans of Upper India believed that they were. It is the state of feeling engendered by such a belief, not the fact itself, that is really significant and important. But there is nothing in which English statesmanship in India fails more egregiously than in this incapacity to discern, or unwillingness to recognise, the prevailing sentiments of the people by whom our statesmen are surrounded. The letter sent to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces was produced, at a later period, as strong evidence of the guilt of the King of Delhi; but the recorded history of this document is, that it was "found among the papers of the late Mr. Colvin."

Intrigues with Persia. The story of the correspondence between the King of Delhi and the Shah of Persia was not a mere fable. Authentic record of such transactions is rarely to be obtained, and history must, therefore, fall back upon evidence which may not be altogether conclusive. 1857. The facts, however, appear to be these.* The power of Mahomedanism is greatly weakened by sectarian divisions. A Soonee hates a Sheeah, or a Sheeah hates a Soonee, almost as much as either hates a Christian. The King of Delhi was a Soonee, whilst the King of Oude and the Shah of Persia were Sheeahs. Now, it happened that whilst Behaudur Shah was in great tribulation because he could not persuade the English Government to gratify the cherished wishes of his favourite wife, he was minded to become a Sheeah. There were some members of his family settled in Oude, who were also of this persuasion. Whether by invitation, or whether of his own motion, is not very apparent, but one of them, the King's nephew, Meerza Hyder by name, accompanied by a brother, visited his Majesty at Delhi, and carried back on his return tidings that the great change had been effected, and that the Mogul sought to be admitted within the pale of the Sheeah religion. This man was known in the Delhi Palace as one rejoicing in intrigue. It could not have been difficult to persuade the old King that the fact of his conversion might be turned to good account, and that if nothing else would come of it, it would make the Shah of Persia and the King of Oude more willing to assist him in the troubles and perplexities by which he was surrounded. It is probable that he had no very clear notion of what might come of such an alliance—no very strong hope that it would end in the overthrow of the English—but he was readily persuaded to address letters to the King of Persia,

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* They are mainly derived from the evidence of Assan-oolah, the King's physician, of all the witnesses on the trial of Behaudur Shah the most accurate and trustworthy. I see no reason to question his statements.

1857. and to despatch them secretly by confidential agents. And this was done before the emissaries from Lucknow had taken their departure. There is a suspicion also that he sent letters to Russia; but, if he did, in all probability they never reached their destination. There was, however, from that time a vague belief in the Palace that both the Persians and the Russians were coming to the deliverance of the King, and that ere long he would again be surrounded by all the splendour that irradiated the Mogul throne in the meridian of its glory.

These intrigues, whatever their importance, were well known in Delhi in the early months of 1857; and the impression which they produced on the minds of the people was strengthened by the sight of a proclamation which was posted on the Jumna Musjeed in the middle of the month of March. This proclamation, purporting to have been issued by the King of Persia, set forth that a Persian army was coming to release India from the grasp of the English, and that it behoved all true Mahomedans to gird up their loins resolutely, and to fight against the unbelievers.* The name of Mahomed Sadik was attached to it; but none knew who he was. In outward appearance it was but an insignificant affair; though it bore rude illustrations representing a sword and a shield, it does not appear to have produced any great excitement in Delhi, and the attention which it attracted was short-lived, for the paper, after the lapse of a few hours, was torn down by order of the magistrate. But the native newspapers published the substance of the proclamation, accompanying it with vague and mysterious hints, or with obscure comments, obviously intended, in some instances, to be read in a contrary sense. There was in these effusions hostility to the British Government—but hostility driven by fear to walk warily. Ambiguous, enigmatical language suited the occasion. It was stated that a communication had been addressed to the magistrate, informing him that in the course of a few weeks Cashmere would be taken; the intent being, it is said, to signify that the Cashmere Gate of Delhi would be in the hands of the enemies of the British Government. There was plainly a very excited state of public feeling about Delhi. The excitement was, doubtless, fomented by some inmates of the Palace; and the King's Guards conversed with the Sepoys of the Company, and the talk was still of a something coming. But Behaudur Shah, in the spring of 1857, was never roused to energetic action. Much was done in his name of which he knew nothing, and much besides which he weakly suffered. And as, in that month of May, news came from Meerut that there was great excitement among the soldiery, and some of the Native officers at Delhi were summoned to take part in the great on-coming trial, those who sat at the King's door talked freely about the revolt of the Native 1857.

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* It is well known that a copy of a proclamation addressed to Mahomedans generally, urging a war of extermination against the English, was found in the tent of the Persian prince at Mohumrah, after the engagement which took place there in the spring of 1857. There was no special reference in this document to the restoration of the Delhi sovereignty; it called upon "the old and the young, the small and the great, the wise and the ignorant, the ryot and the sepoy, all without exception to arise in defence of the orthodox faith of the Prophet." Afterwards it was frankly acknowledged by the Persian Government that they had attempted to create a diversion against us in India—such expedients being all fair in war.

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* See evidence of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe. It was stated, however, in the Native papers, that the proclamation was posted up in the streets and lanes of the city.

1857. army, and in the vestibules of the Palace it was proclaimed that the dynasty of the Moguls would soon be restored, and that all the high offices of State would be held by the people of the country.*

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* Mokund Lal, the King's secretary, said: "I don't know whether any direct proposals came to the prisoner, but the King's personal attendants, sitting about the entrance to his private apartments, used to converse among themselves, and say that very soon, almost immediately, the army would revolt and come to the palace, when the Government of the King would be re-established, and all the old servants would be greatly promoted and advanced in position and emoluments."

CHAPTER II.

STATE OF THE THIRD CAVALRY—THE COURT OF INQUIRY—THE COURT MARTIAL—IMPRISONMENT OF THE EIGHTY-FIVE—THE TENTH OF MAY—RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS—GENERAL REVOLT OF THE SEPOYS—INACTIVITY OF THE EUROPEAN TROOPS—ESCAPE OF THE MUTINEERS—QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY CONSIDERED.

WHILST the vague feeling of excitement above described was gathering strength and consistency at Delhi, and the "something coming" appeared to be approaching nearer and nearer, events were developing themselves in the great military station of Meerut, thirty miles distant, which were destined to precipitate a more momentous crisis in the imperial city than had been anticipated by the inmates of the palace. The Native troops at that great head-quarters station were smouldering into rebellion, and the Sepoy War was about to commence. The brief telegraphic story already recorded,* when it expanded into detailed proportions, took this disastrous shape.

Colonel Smyth and the Third Cavalry. April—May, 1857.

The Third Regiment of Native Cavalry was commanded by Colonel Carmichael Smyth. He had graduated in the regiment, and had seen some service with it, but he had never earned the entire confidence of officers or men. He was not wanting

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* *Ante*, vol. i. p. 595.

April, 1857.

in intelligence or in zeal, but he lacked temper and discretion, and the unquestionable honesty of his nature was of that querulous, irritable cast which makes a man often uncharitable and always unpopular. He had a quick eye for blots of every kind; and, being much addicted to newspaper-writing, seldom failed to make them known to the public. Nobody knew better than Colonel Smyth that the Bengal Army was hovering on the brink of mutiny. He had, in the earlier part of the year, visited the great fair at Hurdwar, where the disaffection of the Nineteenth Regiment had been freely discussed. He had afterwards gone to Mussooree, where he learnt from day to day what was passing at Umballah, and he was so impressed by what he heard respecting the general state of the Sepoy regiments and their readiness for revolt, that he had written to the Commander-in-Chief to inform him of the dangerous state of the Army. But when the general order went forth that the men were no longer to bite the cartridges, Colonel Smyth thought that the opportunity was one of which he should avail himself to allay the excitement in his own regiment, and he therefore held the parade of the 24th of April, with results which have been already described.*

General Hewitt.

Not so thought the officer commanding the Meerut division of the Army. General Hewitt was an old Company's officer, who had risen to high rank by the slow process of regimental and army promotion, and who in quiet times might have drowsed through the years of his employment on the Staff without manifesting any remarkable incapacity for command. The burden of nearly seventy years was aggravated by the obesity of his frame and the inertness of his habits. But he was a kind-hearted, hospitable man, liked by all, and by some respected. It was his desire to keep things quiet, and, if possible, to make them pleasant. He lamented, therefore, that Colonel Smyth had made that crucial experiment upon the fidelity of his regiment which had resulted in open mutiny. "Oh! why did you have a parade?" he said to the Colonel. "My division has kept quiet, and if you had only waited another month or so, all would have blown over."

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* *Ante*, vol. i. p. 567.

April, 1857.

The Court of Inquiry.

It was necessary, however, after what had occurred, in an official point of view to do something. So he ordered a Native Court of Inquiry to be assembled. The Court was composed of six members, four of whom were Native officers of the Infantry and two Native officers of the Cavalry. The witnesses examined, including those who had manufactured and served out the cartridges, said that there was nothing objectionable in them—nothing that could offend the religious scruples of Hindoo or Mahomedan—nothing that in any way differed from the composition of the cartridges which the Sepoys had been using for years. The oldest troopers in the regiment, Hindoo and Mahomedan, were examined; but they could give no satisfactory account of the causes of alarm and disaffection in the regiment. They could only say that a general impression of impurity existed. One Mussulman trooper, with much insolence of manner, blustered out, "I have doubts about the cartridges. They may look exactly like the old ones, but how do I know that pig's fat has not been smeared over them?" But the next witness who was examined—a Hindoo—took one of the cartridges into his hand and handled it freely, to show

April, 1857.

that in his eyes there was nothing offensive in the new ammunition. Altogether, the Court of Inquiry elicited nothing. It dealt with material facts, which were well known before. But it was not the palpable, but the impalpable—a vague and voiceless idea—that had driven the regiment to mutiny. That which the troopers dreaded was not pollution, but opinion. They were troubled, not by any fear of desecration to their faith or of injury to their caste, but by the thought of what their comrades would say of them. In a military sense, in an official sense, all this was unreasonable in the extreme; but every man felt in his inmost heart more than he could explain in intelligible words, and the shadow of a great fear was upon him, more terrible for its indistinctness.

The proceedings of the Court of Inquiry were sent to Head-Quarters; and whilst the orders of the Commander-in-Chief were awaited, the Eighty-five were dismissed from duty, and ordered to abide in their Lines. There was, then, for a little space, a fever of expectancy. What meetings, and conspiracies, and oath-takings there may have been in the Sepoys' quarter during that long week of waiting, can be only dimly conjectured; but one form of expression, in which their feelings declared themselves, was patent to all. It was written in characters of fire, and blazed out of the darkness of the night. From the verandahs of their houses the European officers saw these significant illuminations, and knew what they portended. The burnings had commenced on the evening preceding the fatal parade of the 24th of April, when an empty hospital had been fired.* Then followed a more expressive conflagration. The house of a Sepoy named Bridge-Mohun Singh, who had been the first to practise the new mode of using the cartridges, was burnt down. This man (the son of a pig-keeper), who had been dismissed from an Infantry regiment and imprisoned for theft, had enlisted under a new name in the Third Cavalry, and had managed so to ingratiate himself with the Commanding Officer, that he was seldom absent from the Colonel's bungalow. To the whole regiment, and especially to its high-caste men, this was an offence and an abomination, and nothing could more clearly indicate the feeling in the Lines of the Third than the fact that this man's house was burnt down by the troopers of his own regiment.

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* Colonel Smyth says it was a horse-hospital.

In the bungalows also of the European residents, during this first week of May, there was much excitement and discussion. There was plainly a very disagreeable entanglement of events out of which it was not easy to see the way, and people said freely that it ought never to have arisen. But speculation with respect to the Future was even more busy than censure with respect to the Past. What, it was asked, would be the issue of the reference to Head-Quarters? The more general belief was, that orders would come for the dismissal of the recusant troopers; but even this, it was thought, would be a harsh measure, that might drive others, by force of sympathy, to rebellion. It was an interval which might have been turned by our English officers to good account in soothing the feelings of their men, and explaining everything that was of a doubtful or suspicious character. Some, indeed, did strive, with a wise foreknowledge of the coming danger, to accomplish this good object; but others believed that all was right, that there was no likelihood of their regiments being driven either by their fears or their

May, 1857.

resentments to revolt against the Law; and they drowsed on placidly in the conviction that it was but an accidental ebullition, provoked by the mismanagement of an indiscreet Commanding Officer, and that the general temper of the Native troops at Meerut was all that could be desired.

The Court-Martial.

In the first week of May the instructions so eagerly looked-for were received from the Head-Quarters of the Army. The fiat of General Anson had gone forth from Simlah. A Native General Court-Martial was to be assembled at Meerut for the trial of the Eighty-five. The prisoners were then confined in an empty hospital, and a guard of their own regiment was placed over them. The tribunal before which they were to be brought up for trial was composed of fifteen Native officers, of whom six were Mahomedans and nine were Hindoos. Ten of these members were furnished by the regiments at Meerut—Artillery, Cavalry, and Infantry; five came from the Infantry regiments at Delhi. On the 6th of May the Court commenced its sittings,* and continued its proceedings on the two following days. The examination of Colonel Smyth and the other witnesses for the prosecution elicited no new facts, and, indeed, the whole case of military disobedience was so clear, that the trial, though it was protracted during three days, was little more than a grim formality. Every man felt that his condemnation was certain, and sullenly abided the issue. The prisoners could put forth no defence which either Law or Discipline could accept.

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* The charge was, "For having at Meerut, on the 24th of April, 1857, severally and individually disobeyed the lawful command of their superior officer, Brevet-Colonel G. M. C. Smyth, commanding the Third Regiment of Light Cavalry, by not having taken the cartridges tendered to each of them individually for use that day on parade, when ordered by Colonel Smyth to take the said cartridges."

1857. May.

But when the Havildar Muttadeen Singh pleaded, on behalf of himself and comrades, that they suspected some foul design because their Commandant took so much pains to convince them that it was all right, and to induce them to fire the cartridges, there was something not altogether irrational or illogical in the argument. If there was nothing in the ammunition different from that which they had always used, why, it was asked, should the proceedings of the Colonel have been so different?* But in effect the defence of the prisoners was little more than a confession, and the Court, by a vote of fourteen members against one, found the Eighty-five guilty, and sentenced them to imprisonment and hard labour for ten years. But with this there went forth a recommendation to "favourable consideration on account of the good character which the prisoners had hitherto borne, as testified to by their Commanding Officer, and on account of their having been misled by vague reports regarding the cartridges."

The sentence confirmed.

The proceedings went up, in due course, to the General commanding the Division, and Hewitt approved and confirmed the sentence. "I would willingly attend," he remarked, "to the recommendation of the Court, if I could find anything in the conduct of the prisoners that would warrant me in so doing. Their former good character has been blasted by pre-

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* The same difficulty suggested itself to the Court. Colonel Smyth was asked, "Why did you tell the men that they would have to fire, instead of merely ordering them to do so?" Colonel Smyth's answer was: "The parade was in orders the day before, and entered in the order-book as usual, and each man was ordered to receive three cartridges. I wished to show them the new way of loading without putting the cartridges to the mouth, and attended the parade for that purpose. When I came on parade, the Adjutant informed me that the men had not taken their cartridges, and it was on that account I ordered the Havildar-Major to take a cartridge and load and fire before them; and it was then, also, that I said, that when the whole Army hear of this way of loading they would be much pleased, and exclaim, 'Wah! wah!'"

1857. May. sent misbehaviour, and their having allowed themselves to be influenced by vague reports instead of attending to the advice and obeying the orders of their European superiors, is the gist of the offence for which they have been condemned. It appears from these proceedings that these misguided men, after consultation together on the night of the 23rd of April, 1857, came to the resolution of refusing their cartridges. Having so far forgotten their duty as soldiers, their next step was to send word to their troop captains that they would not take their cartridges unless the whole of the troops in the station would do so likewise. Some of them even had the insolence to desire that firing parades might be deferred till the agitation about cartridges among the Native troops had come to a close. In this state of insubordination they appeared on parade on the morning of the 24th, and there consummated the crime for which they are now about to suffer, by repeatedly refusing cartridges that had been made as usual in their regimental magazine, when assured, too, by Colonel Smyth that the cartridges had no grease on them—that they were old ones, and exactly similar to what had been in use in the regiment for thirty or forty years. Even now they attempt to justify so gross an outrage upon discipline by alleging that they had doubts of the cartridges. There has been no acknowledgment of error—no expression of regret—no pleading for mercy." "To the majority of the prisoners," therefore, it was added, "no portion of the sentence will be remitted. I observe, however, that some of them are very young, and I am willing to make allowance for their having been misled by their more experienced comrades, and under these circumstances I remit one half of the sentence passed upon the following men, who have not been more than five years in the service." And then followed the names of eleven young troopers, whose term of imprisonment was commuted to five years. The sentence was to be carried into effect at daybreak on the 9th of May.

May 9. Execution of the sentence.

The morning dawned, lowering and gusty, and the troops of the Meerut Brigade were drawn up on the ground of the Sixtieth Rifles to see the prisoners formally dismissed to their doom. The Third Cavalry had received their orders to attend unmounted. The European troops and the Artillery, with their field-guns, were so disposed as to threaten instant death to the Sepoys on the first symptom of resistance. Under a guard of Rifles and Carabineers, the Eighty-five were then brought forward, clad in their regimental uniforms—soldiers still; and then the sentence was read aloud, which was to convert soldiers into felons. Their accoutrements were taken from them, and their uniforms were stripped from their backs. Then the armourers and the smiths came forward with their shackles and their tools, and soon, in the presence of that great concourse of their old comrades, the Eighty-five stood, with the outward symbols of their dire disgrace fastened upon them. It was a piteous spectacle, and many there were moved with a great compassion, when they saw the despairing gestures of those wretched men, among whom were some of the very flower of the regiment—soldiers who had served the British Government in trying circumstances and in strange places, and who had never before wavered in their allegiance. Lifting up their hands and lifting up their voices, the prisoners implored the General to have mercy upon them, and not to consign them to so ignominious a doom.

1857. May. Then, seeing that there was no other hope, they turned to their comrades and reproached them for quietly suffering this disgrace to descend upon them. There was not a Sepoy present who did not feel the rising indignation in his throat. But in the presence of those loaded field-guns and those grooved rifles, and the glittering sabres of the Dragoons, there could not be a thought of striking. The prisoners were marched off to their cells, to be placed under the custody of a guard of their own countrymen; the parade was dismissed; and the Sepoys, Cavalry and Infantry, went, silent and stern, to their work, to talk over the incidents of that mournful morning parade.*

It was Saturday. So far as English eyes could see or English brains could understand, the day passed quietly over. The troop-captains of the Third Cavalry visited the prisoners in the gaol, which was situated at a distance of about two miles from the cantonment, to be for the last time the channel of communication between them and the outer world. It was their duty to adjust the balances of the Sepoys' pay, and they were anxious, in the kindness of their hearts, to arrange the settlements of the prisoners' debts, and to carry any messages which the men might desire to send to the families from whom they had been sundered. And whilst this was going on in the gaol, wild reports were flying about the Bazaars, and there was a great fear in the Lines, for it was said that the Europeans were about to take possession of the magazines, and that the two thousand fetters, of which Rumour had spoken before, were now ready, and that the work of the morning was only an experiment and a beginning. But the shades of evening fell upon Meerut, and the English residents, after their accustomed ride, met each other at dinner, and talked cheerfully and confidently of the Past and the Future. At one dinner-table, where the Commissioner and his wife and the Colonel of the Eleventh Sepoys were present, a rumour was mentioned to the effect that the walls had been placarded with a Mahomedan proclamation calling upon the people to rise against the English. But the general feeling was one of indignant disbelief, and each man went to his home and laid his head upon his pillow as tranquilly as though from one end of Meerut to another there had been no bitter resentments to be gratified, in the breasts of any but the manacled, harmless, helpless prisoners in the great gaol.

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* Lord Canning's commentary on these proceedings may be given here: "The rivetting of the men's fetters on parade, occupying, as it did, several hours, in the presence of many who were already ill-disposed, and many who believed in the cartridge fable, must have stung the brigade to the quick. The consigning the eighty-five prisoners, after such a ceremony, to the gaol, with no other than a native guard over them, was, considering the nature of their offence, and the known temper of a part of the army, a folly that is inconceivable."—*Letter to Mr. Vernon Smith, June 5, 1857. MS. Correspondence.*

The Meerut Cantonment.

I must pause here, a little space, for the better explanation of what follows, to speak of the great cantonment of Meerut. This military station was one of the most extensive in India. It covered an area of some five miles in circumference, the space being divided by a great mall or esplanade, along which ran a deep nullah, or ditch, cutting the station into two separate parallelograms, the one containing the European and the other the Native force. The European Lines were on the northern quarter of Meerut, the Artillery Barracks being to the right, the Dragoons to the left, and the Rifles in the centre. Between the barracks of the two last stood the station church; a great plain or parade-ground stretching out still further to the northward. The Sepoy Lines

1857. May. lay to the south of the cantonment, and between what may be called the European and Native quarters, there was an intervening space covered with shops and houses, surrounded by gardens and trees. Still further to the southward lay the city. The officers of the European regiments and Artillery occupied bungalows along the northern line, whilst the Sepoy officers dwelt chiefly near their own men. The Brigadier's house was on the right, not far from the Artillery Barracks and Mess-House. The General's residence was nearer to the Native Lines. The most noticeable features of the whole, and those which it is most important to bear in mind in the perusal of what follows, are the division of the great cantonment into two parts, the distance of the European barracks from the Native Lines, and the probability, therefore of much that was passing in the latter being wholly unknown to the occupants of the former.

Sunday, May 10. The fierce May sun rose on the Sabbath morning, and the English residents prepared themselves to attend the ministrations of their religion in the station church. There was, indeed, a lull; but the signs of it, afterwards noted, clearly presaged that there was something in the air. In the European barracks it appeared that there was a general desertion of the Native servants, whose business it was to administer to the wants of the white soldiery, and in the bungalows of the officers there was a disposition on the part of their domestics, especially of those who had been hired at Meerut, to absent themselves from their masters' houses. But these things were observable at the time only as accidental circumstances of little significance, and the morning service was performed and the mid-day heats were lounged through, as in times of ordinary security. Severed from the

1857. May 10.

great mass of the people, the English could see nothing of an unwonted character on that Sunday afternoon; but in the Lines of the Native soldiery, in the populous Bazaars, and even in the surrounding villages there were signs of a great commotion. The very children could see that something was about to happen. Men of all kinds were arming themselves. The dangerous classes were in a state of unwonted excitement and activity. Many people of bad character had come in from the adjacent hamlets, and even from more remote places, as though they discerned the prospect of a great harvest. Among the mixed population of the Lines and the Bazaars were men agitated by emotions of the most varied character. Hatred of the English, desire for revenge, religious enthusiasm, thirst for plunder, were all at work within them; but paramount over all was a nameless fear; for, ever as the day advanced, the report gained strength that the English soldiery, armed to the teeth, would soon be let loose amongst them; that every Sepoy before nightfall would have fetters on his wrists; that the People would be given up to massacre, and the Bazaars to plunder.

The sun went down and the time came for evening service, and the English chaplains prepared themselves for their ministrations. One has narrated how, when he was about to start with his wife for the station church, the Native nurse warned them that there was danger, and besought her mistress to remain at home. The woman said that there would be a fight with the Sepoys, but the Chaplain listened incredulously to the statement, and taking his wife and children with him, entered his carriage, and was driven to church.* In the church-compound he met

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* See the Chaplain's (Mr. Rotton's) Narrative. He left his wife and children in a place of safety on the way to church.

1857. May 10.

his colleague and other Christian people with a look of anxious inquiry on their pale, scared faces. It was plain that the warning by which it was endeavoured to stay his progress was something more than an utterance of vague suspicion or senseless fear. Sounds and sights had greeted the church-goers on their way which could not be misinterpreted. The unwonted rattling of musketry on that Sabbath evening, the assembly-call of the buglers, the hurrying to and fro of armed men on the road, the panic-struck looks of the unarmed, the columns of smoke that were rising against the fast-darkening sky, all told the same story. The Native troops at Meerut had revolted.

Outbreak of the Sepoys.

It will never be known with certainty whence arose the first promptings to that open and outrageous rebellion of which these sounds and sights were the signs. What meetings and conspiracies there may have been in the Lines—whether there was any organised scheme for the release of the prisoners, the burning of cantonments, and the murder of all the Christian officers, can be only dimly conjectured. The probabilities are at variance with the assumption that the Native troops at Meerut deliberately launched themselves into an enterprise of so apparently desperate a character. With a large body of English troops—Horse, Foot, and Artillery—to confront them in the hour of mutiny, what reasonable hopes could there be of escape from swift and crushing retribution? They knew the temper and the power of English soldiers too well to trust to a contingency of inaction of which the Past afforded no example. There was not a station in India at which an outbreak of Native troops could appear to be so hopeless an experiment as in that great military cantonment which had become the Head-Quarters of the finest

Artillery Regiment in the world. But this very feeling of our overpowering strength at Meerut may have driven the Sepoys into the great panic of despair, out of which came the spasm of madness which produced such unexpected results on that Sabbath night. There had been for some days an ominous report, of which I have already spoken, to the effect that the Europeans were about to fall suddenly on the Sepoy regiments, to disarm them, and to put every man of them in chains. In fear and trembling they were looking for a confirmation of this rumour in every movement of the English troops. When, therefore, the Sixtieth Rifles were assembling for church parade, the Sepoys believed that the dreaded hour had arrived. The Third Cavalry were naturally the most excited of all. Eighty-five of their fellow-soldiers were groaning in prison. Sorrow, shame, and indignation were strong within them for their comrades' sake, and terror for their own. They had been taunted by the courtesans of the Bazaar, who asked if they were men to suffer their comrades to wear such anklets of iron;* and they believed that what they had seen on the day before was but a foreshadowing of a greater cruelty to come. So, whilst the European soldiers were preparing themselves for church parade, the Native troopers were mounting their horses and pricking forward towards the great gaol. 1857. May 10.

Rescue of the prisoners. Then it became miserably apparent that a fatal error had been committed. There were no European

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* This is stated very distinctly by Mr. T. C. Wilson (an excellent authority) in his interesting Moradabad Report. "And now," he writes, "the frail ones' taunts were heard far and wide, and the rest of the regiment was assailed with words like these: 'Your brethren have been ornamented with these anklets and incarcerated; and for what? Because they would not swerve from their creed; and you, cowards as you are, sit still indifferent to your fate. If you have an atom of manhood in you, go and release them.'"

1857. May 10.

soldiers posted to protect the prison-house in which were the condemned malefactors of the Sepoy Army. The prisoners had been given over to the "civil power," and an additional guard, drawn from the Twentieth Sepoy Regiment, had been placed over the gaol. The troopers knew what was the temper of that regiment. They had no fear for the result, so they pushed on, some in uniform, man and horse fully accoutred, some in their stable dresses with only watering rein and horse-cloth on their chargers, but all armed with sabre and with pistol. Soon under the walls of the gaol—soon busy at their work—they met with, as they expected, no opposition. The rescue began at once. Loosening the masonry around the gratings of the cells in which their comrades were confined, they wrenched out the iron bars and helped the prisoners through the apertures. A Native smith struck off their chains, and once again free men, the Eighty-five mounted behind their deliverers, and rode back to the Lines. The troopers of the Third Cavalry at that time had no other work in hand but the rescue of their comrades. The other prisoners in the gaol were not released, the buildings were not fired, and the European gaoler and his family were left unmolested.*

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* There are conflicting statements on the subject of the release of the prisoners in the new gaol. Dr. O'Callaghan ("Scattered Chapters on the Indian Mutiny") asserts, that not only the eighty-five, but all the other prisoners had been released by the infantry guard before the cavalry arrived. When the troopers arrived, he says, "After their rapid and furious gallop at the gaol, they found their comrades already released and emerging from incarceration, and the general crowd of felons also rushing rapidly forth to join in the fire, pillage, and slaughter." But Mr. Commissioner Williams, in his very circumstantial official report, says that the troopers "dug out of the wall the gratings of some of the windows of the ward in which the eighty-five mutineers were confined, and took their comrades away, the guard of the Twentieth accompanying, and the armed guard of the gaol soon followed. None of the other convicts, in number about eight hundred, were released by the cavalry troopers, nor was any injury done by them to the buildings." But he adds,

1857. May 10. Revolt of the Infantry.

Meanwhile, the Infantry regiments had broken into open revolt. The Sepoys of the Eleventh and the Twentieth were in a state of wild excitement. Maddened by their fears—expecting every moment that the Europeans would be upon them—believing that there was one great design in our hearts to manacle the whole of them, and, perhaps, to send them as convicts across the black water, they thought that the time had come for them to strike for their liberties, for their lives, for their religions. So it happened that when the excitement in the Lines was made known to some of our English officers, and they went down, as duty bade them, to endeavour to allay it, they found that the men whom they had once regarded as docile children had been suddenly turned into furious assailants. Among those who, on that Sunday evening, rode down to the Sepoys' Lines was Colonel Finnis, who commanded the Eleventh. A good soldier, beloved by officers and by men, he had the old traditionary faith in the Sepoys which it became those, who had served with them and knew their good qualities, to cherish. Strong in the belief of the loyalty of his regiment, Finnis, with other officers of his corps, went into the midst of them to remonstrate and to dissuade. He was speaking to his men, when a soldier of the Twentieth discharged his musket and wounded the Colonel's horse. Presently another musket was discharged into his body. The ball entered at his back; he fell from his horse, and a volley was fired into him. He died, "riddled with bullets." Thus the Sepoys of the Twentieth had slain the Colonel of the Eleventh Regiment, and the

Death of Colonel Finnis.

"About three hundred or four hundred Sepoys released the convicts from the old gaol, which is between the city and the Native lines, and which contained about seven hundred and twenty prisoners altogether."

1857. May 10.

bullets of the former had been scattered in the ranks of the latter. For a little space the two regiments looked at each other; but there was no doubt of the issue. The Eleventh broke into open revolt, and fraternised with their comrades of the Twentieth.

Progress of the Revolt.

The whole of the Native Regiments at Meerut had now revolted. The Sepoys of the Infantry and the troopers of the Cavalry had made common cause against us. Hindoos and Mahomedans were stirred by one impulse to slaughter the Feringhees, man, woman, and child. So as the sun went down the massacre went on, and our people, who were returning from the unaccomplished evening service, or, ignorant of the excitement and the danger, were starting for the wonted evening ride or drive, were fiercely assailed by the infuriated soldiery, and shot down or sabred as they sate their horses or leaned back in their carriages to enjoy the coolness of the air. Wheresoever a stray English soldier was to be found, he was murdered without remorse. The Bazaars and the neighbouring villages were pouring forth their gangs of plunderers and incendiaries. From every street and alley, and from the noisome suburbs, they streamed forth, like wild beasts from their lairs, scenting the prey.* The prisoners in the gaols were

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* "Cities, like forests, have their dens, in which everything that is most wicked and formidable conceals itself. The only difference is that what hides itself thus in cities is ferocious, unclean, and little—that is to say, ugly; what conceals itself in the forests is ferocious, savage, and grand—that is to say, beautiful. Den for den, those of the beasts are preferable to those of men, and caverns are better than hiding-places."—*Victor Hugo.* Mr. Commissioner Williams, in his official report above quoted, says that the towns-people had armed themselves and were ready for the onslaught before the Sepoys had commenced the carnage. "Before a shot had been fired, the inhabitants of the Sudder Bazaar went out armed with swords, spears, and clubs, any weapon they could lay hands on, collected in crowds in every lane and alley, and at every outlet of the Bazaars; and the residents of the wretched hamlets, which had been allowed to spring up all round it and between it and the city, were to be seen similarly armed, pouring out to share in what they evidently knew was going to happen."

1857. May 10.

let loose, and the police became their comrades in crime. But so little concert and arrangement was there, that some detachments on guard-duty, posted in the European quarter of the great straggling cantonment, appear to have remained faithful to their English masters after their fellow-soldiers had broken out into open revolt. Indeed, whilst in one part of the cantonment the Sepoys were butchering their officers, in another they were saluting them as they passed, as though nothing had happened.* Even at the Treasury, with all its manifest temptations, the Guard stood staunchly to its duty, and at a later hour made over the charge in all its integrity to the Europeans sent to defend it. Not a rupee had been touched by the Sepoys. And when the rabble from the city swarmed upon it, they found it covered by a guard of Riflemen.

But, in the midst of all this great tribulation, there was, in the hearts of our Christian people, a strength of confidence which calmed and comforted them; for they said to each other, or they said to themselves, "The Europeans will soon be upon them." There were two regiments of Sepoy Infantry at Meerut, and a regiment of Sepoy Cavalry. But the English mustered a battalion of Riflemen, a regiment of Dragoons armed with carbines, and a large force of European Artillery, with all the accessories of Head-Quarters.†

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* I do not mean to signify that the Sepoys in the European quarter of the cantonment were uniformly quiescent at this time; for I am informed that the Guard at Brigadier Wilson's house fired at some officers who were passing, before they broke away. But there was obviously no general concert.

† History, however, must not exaggerate the actual strength of this European force. There were some deteriorating circumstances, of which account must be taken. A considerable number of the Carabineers could not ride, and there were no horses for them, if they could. Not more than half of the regiment (five hundred strong) were mounted. Many of the European gunners, too, were young recruits, imperfectly acquainted with artillery drill. There were only two field-batteries fully equipped.

1857. May 10.

There was not an Englishwoman in the cantonment—the model cantonment of India—who, remembering the presence of this splendid body of White soldiers, had any other thought, at the first semblance of open mutiny, than that there must be a sad massacre of the Native troops. With a regiment of British Dragoons and a few Galloper guns, Gillespie, half a century before, had crushed the mutiny of Vellore, and saved the Southern Peninsula from universal revolt and rebellion.* He struck decisively because he struck at once. And no one now doubted that a blow struck with promptitude and vigour on this Sabbath evening would save Meerut, and check the nascent activities of revolt in the adjacent country. But by God's providence, for whatsoever purpose designed, this first great revolt of the Sepoys was suffered, unchecked, unpunished, to make headway in a clear field, and to carry everything before it. The great confidence of the Christian people was miserably misplaced. They looked for a deliverance that never came. In some parts of the great cantonment they were abandoned to fire and slaughter as hopelessly as though there had not been a single English soldier in that great Head-Quarters of the Meerut Division.

Inaction of the Europeans.

The story of this great failure is not easily told, and the attempt to tell it cannot be made without sadness. Many narratives of the events of that night have been written; and each writer has told, with graphic distinctness of detail, what he himself saw and heard; but the confusion of those few critical hours is fully represented by the confusedness of the entire story; and it is difficult to impart unity and consistency to a scene, made up of scattered effects, bewildering and distracting. What was wanted in that conjuncture was the one man to impart to our British manhood the promptitude and unity of action which would have crushed the mutiny and saved the place—perhaps the country: and that one man did not arise in the hour of our tribulation.

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* See *ante*, vol. i. pages 230—232.

Conduct of Colonel Smyth.

There were three officers at Meerut whose bearing in that critical hour the historian is especially bound to investigate. They were, the officer commanding the Third Cavalry, the Brigadier commanding the Station, and the General commanding the Division. All three were resident in Meerut. It is not to be questioned that when a regiment breaks into mutiny, the place of the commanding officer, for life or for death, is in the midst of it. Not until all hope has gone can there be any excuse for his departure. As the captain of a blazing vessel at sea is ever the last to leave the quarter-deck and to let himself down the side of his ship, so the commandant of a regiment in the fire of revolt should cling to it as long as the semblance of a regiment remains, and the safety of others can be aided by his presence. When, therefore, intelligence reached Colonel Smyth that the troopers of his regiment had broken into mutiny, it was his duty to proceed at once to the Cavalry Lines. But he did not go near the Lines.* He went to the

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* "Most of the officers of the Third Light Cavalry at once proceeded to the lines of their regiment, arming hastily, and ordering their horses to follow; but I have never been able to discover that the officer commanding the corps repaired to his post, or was seen in the lines amongst the men, during the whole of that eventful evening and night; and it would appear that Colonel Smyth was so fortunate as to make an early escape into the protection of the European military quarter."—*O'Callaghan. Scattered Chapters on the Indian Mutiny.* It should be stated, however, that Colonel Smyth was Field-Officer of the week—a fact upon which he himself has laid considerable stress, as though, in his estimation, it exempted him from all special regard for his own particular regiment.

1857. May 10. Commissioner's house. He went to the General's; and he went to the Brigadier's. He went everywhere but to his Regiment. From the moment that the troopers broke out into revolt they saw no more of their Colonel. He spent the night with the Head-Quarters of the Division, where the Rifles and the Carbines and the Field-guns were collected, and never had the least conception all the time of what had become of his men.* But they were not all past hope. That something might have been done to save at least a portion of the regiment we know. Captain Craigie, at the first sound of the tumult, mustered his troop, ordered them to accoutre themselves as for a parade, and when they had mounted, galloped down to the gaol, accompanied by his subaltern, Melville Clarke. They were too late to prevent the rescue of the prisoners; but not to set a grand example. Craigie and Clarke kept their men together, and brought them back, with unbroken discipline, to the parade-ground of the regiment. And during that night many acts of heroic fidelity were written down to the honour of Craigie's troop. They had faith in their Captain. And it has been truly recorded of Craigie and Clarke, that "these gallant Englishmen handled the troop as if mutiny were a crime unknown to their men."†

Captain Craigie.

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* Colonel Smyth has published his own account of his proceedings on the evening of the 10th of May: "I went," he says, "first to Mr. Greathed's, gave information to the servants, as Mr. G. was out. . . . . I then went on to the General's, and heard that he had just left the house in his carriage; so I galloped on to the Brigadier's. . . . . I went on to the Artillery parade, and found the Brigadier already on the ground; and I accompanied him with the troops to the other end of the cantonments, and remained with him all night, and accompanied him again the next morning with Cavalry, Infantry, and Artillery through the cantonments, and went with the Artillery and Cavalry on the right of the Delhi road," &c. &c.

† Official Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams. The writer states that "Lieutenant Clarke rode out from the head of the troop, and ran his sword through a trooper of the regiment who was insulting an European lady, and Captain Craigie gave the wretch his finishing stroke."

1857.
May 10
Brigadier Wilson.

The station was commanded by Colonel Archdale Wilson, Brigadier of Artillery. He was a man of a spare and wiry frame, of active athletic habits, who had ever borne a good character in the splendid regiment to the command of which he had then risen. For some years, when the Head-Quarters of the Artillery had been at Dum-Dum, in the vicinity of Calcutta, he had been Adjutant-General of the regiment, and was thoroughly acquainted with all its details. But he had not seen much active service since his youth, and had never had any grave responsibilities cast upon him. His training had been too purely of a professional character to generate any great capacity for taking in a situation of such magnitude as that which he was now suddenly called upon to confront. But he was not a man, in such a crisis as had then arisen, to look idly on, or to shrink from a forward movement. What he did at the outset was what it became him to do. It was about half-past six when Brigade-Major Whish drove into the Brigadier's compound, and told him that the Native troops had broken into mutiny. Instantly Wilson ordered his horse to be saddled and brought round, and having sent orders to the Artillery and Carabineers to join him there, he galloped to the parade-ground of the Rifles, and finding them on the point of marching for Church, directed their Colonel to dismiss the parade, and to reassemble them as quickly as possible with their arms. This was promptly effected; but there was some delay in supplying the regiment with balled cartridge. The Dragoons had not yet come up. With a strange incapacity to understand the situation, the Commanding Officer had suffered the regiment to be mustered as for an ordinary parade; and the slow process of roll-call had been going on

1857. May 10.

whilst the last hour of daylight was passing away; and the enemy were slaughtering our people with impunity.

Movements of the Europeans.

Meanwhile, General Hewitt had appeared on parade, and the Artillery had been brought up to the ground. When Colonel Jones reported that the Rifles were ready for action, Wilson, with the General's sanction, detached one company to the Collector's cutcherry to protect the treasure, and another for the protection of the barracks. Taking the other companies, with the Artillery, he marched down upon the Native Infantry Lines, where he expected to find the main body of the mutineers assembled. On or near the parade-ground he was joined by the Carabineers, who had lost their way.* There was now a force ready for action which might have destroyed all the Sepoys in Meerut, if they could have been brought into action with the white soldiers—if, indeed, our people could only have seen the enemy for a little space of time. But the shades of night had now fallen upon the scene. And when, near the Native Infantry huts, the English troops were deployed into line and swept the whole space where it was expected that the mutineers would have been found, not a man was to be seen, either in the Infantry Lines or on the parade-ground; and none knew whither they were gone. But near the Cavalry Lines a few troopers were seen, and the Rifles opened fire upon them. The mutineers fled into a wood or copse at the rear of their huts, and the guns were then unlimbered, and a few harmless rounds of grape fired into the obscurity of the night.

It was plain now that the mutineers were dispersed. The question was, What were they doing?

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* Brigadier Wilson did not see the Carabineers until the whole body of troops were returning to the European Lines.

To Wilson it seemed that the mutineers had moved round to the European quarter of the Cantonment; and he therefore recommended the General to move back the brigade for its protection. To this Hewitt, glad to be advised, assented; and the troops set their faces homewards. By this time the moon had risen, and the blazing bungalows of the English officers lit up the scene with a lurid glare. But our troops met only a few unarmed plunderers. The mutineers were not to be seen. What, then, was to be done? It has been often stated that one officer at least answered the question as it ought to have been answered. Captain Rosser, of the Carabineers (so the story runs), offered to lead a squadron of his regiment and a few Horse Artillery guns in pursuit of the enemy along the Delhi road. But the anecdote is one of doubtful authenticity.* It is only certain that the enemy escaped; and that, with the exception of some pickets which were planted on the bridges across the nullah which ran between the European Cantonment and the Native Lines and Sudder Bazaar, the whole of Hewitt's force bivouacked for the night on the European parade-ground. 1857. May 10—11

May 10—11. Terrors of the night.

And the night was a night of horror such as History has rarely recorded. The brief twilight of the Indian summer had soon passed; and the darkness which fell upon the scene brought out, with terrible distinctness, the blazing work of the incendiary. Everywhere, from the European quarters, from the bungalows of the English officers, from the mess-houses and other public buildings, from the residences of the unofficial Christian community, the flames were seen to rise, many-shaped and many-coloured,

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* See Appendix for an inquiry into the truth of this story.

1857. May 10—11.

lighting up the heavy columns of smoke which were suspended in the still sultry air. And ever, as the conflagration spread, and the sight became more portentous, the sounds of the great fiery destruction, the crackling and the crashing of the burning and falling timbers, the roar of the flames, and the shrieks of the horses scorched to death in their stables, mingled with the shouts and yells of the mutineers and the rattling of the musketry which proclaimed the great Christian carnage. The scared inhabitants of the burning buildings—the women and children and non-combatants—sought safety in the gardens and out-houses, whither they were often tracked by the insurgents, and shot down or cut to pieces. Some fled in the darkness, and found asylums in such places as had escaped the fury of the incendiaries. Some were rescued by native servants or soldiers, faithful among the faithless, who, in memory of past kindnesses, strove to save the lives of their white masters at the peril of their own.

Escape of the Commissioner.

Among those who were thus saved were Hervey Greathed, the Commissioner, and his wife. Warned of the approaching danger, first by an officer of the Third Cavalry, and then by a pensioned Afghan chief, he had taken his wife, and some other Englishwomen who had sought safety with him, to the terraced roof of his house; but the insurgents, after driving off his guard, applied the firebrand to the lower part of the building, plundered the rooms, and then surrounded the place. With the flames raging beneath him, and the enemy raging around him, his position was one of deadly peril. And Greathed and his companions must have perished miserably but for the fidelity of one of those Native servants upon whom so much depended in the crisis which

1857. May 10—11.

was then threatening our people. With rare presence of mind and fertility of resource he simulated intense sympathy with the rebels. He told them that it was bootless to search the house, as his master had escaped from it, but that, if they would follow him to a little distance, they would find the Feringhees hiding themselves behind a haystack. Fully confiding in the truth of his story, they suffered themselves to be led away from the house; and its inmates descended safely into an empty garden just as the upper rooms were about to "fall in with a tremendous crash."*

Incidents of the night.

There were others far less happy on that disastrous Sunday evening. Wives, left without protection whilst their husbands were striving to do their duty in the Lines, were savagely cut to pieces in their burning homes; and little children were massacred beneath the eyes of their mothers. Then delicate English ladies, girt about with fiery danger, death on every side, turned, with a large-hearted sympathy, their thoughts towards their suffering fellow-countrywomen, and tried to rescue them from the threatened doom. In adjacent bungalows were two ladies, wives of officers of the Brigade. One was under special protection, for her husband had endeared himself to the men of his troop by his unfailing kindness and consideration for them. The other, wife of the Adjutant of the Eleventh Regiment, had but recently come from England, and was strange to all the environments of her situation. The more experienced Englishwoman, seeing the danger of her position, and hearing the shrieks which issued from her house, was moved with a great compassion, and sent her servants

Mrs. Craigie.

Mrs. Chambers.

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* Mrs. Greathed's Narrative. See also note in Appendix for some account of the gallant and devoted conduct of Syud Meer Khan, an Afghan Pensioner resident at Meerut.

1857. May 10—11. to rescue the affrighted creature from the fury of her assailants. But when, after some delay, they entered her house, they found her covered with wounds, lying dead upon the floor. Then the insurgents, having done their bloody work, raged furiously against the adjacent bungalow, and were only driven from their purpose by the fidelity of some of Craigie's troopers, who were ready to save the wife of their Captain at the risk of their own lives. In the course of the night, after doing good service, Craigie returned, in fear and trembling, to his household gods, thinking to find them shattered and desecrated; but, by the exceeding mercy of God, safe himself, he found them safe, and soon had matured measures for their escape. Wrapping up the ladies in dark-coloured horse-cloths to conceal their white garments in the glare of the burning station, he led them from the house, and hiding under trees, or in a ruined temple, they passed the night in sleepless horror. Often the voices of bands of mutineers or plunderers in the compound smote upon their ears; but there were help and protection in the presence of a few of Craigie's troopers, who hovered about the place, and in some of his own body-servants, who were equally true to their master. In the early morning the enemy had cleared off, and there was a prospect of escape. So they returned sadly to their dearly-loved home, collected a few cherished articles and some necessary clothing, and went forth from their Paradise with the flaming sword behind them, never again to return. And the leave-takings of that sorrow-laden night were the first of many cruel divulsions, which tore happy families from their homes and sent them forth into the wide world, houseless wanderers and fugitives, with a savage and remorseless enemy yelling behind them in their track.

Many other episodes of pathetic interest might here be related illustrative of the horrors of that night, if historical necessity did not forbid such amplitude of detailed recital. The sweepings of the gaols and the scum of the Bazaars—all the rogues and ruffians of Meerut, convicted and unconvicted, and the robber-tribes of the neighbouring villages—were loose in the Cantonment, plundering and destroying wherever an English bungalow was to be gutted and burnt. The Sepoys had left the work, which they had commenced, to men who found it truly a congenial task. Day dawned; and those who survived the night saw how thoroughly the work had been done. As they crept from their hiding-places and sought safety in the public buildings protected by the Europeans, they saw, in the mangled corpses which lay by the wayside, in the blackened ruins of the houses which skirted the roads, and in the masses of unmovable property, thrown out of the dwelling-places of the English, and smashed into fragments apparently by blows from heavy clubs, ghastly evidences of the fury of their enemies.* But with the morning light a great quietude had fallen upon the scene. The Sepoys had departed. The ruffians of the gaols and the Bazaars and the Goojur villages had slunk back into their homes. There was little more to be done—nothing more that could be done in the face of the broad day—by these despicable marauders. So our people gathered new heart; and as the sun rose, they thought that our time had come.

1857.
May 11.

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* "The inveterate animosity with which the work of destruction was carried out may be judged of by the fact that houses built entirely of masonry, with nothing inflammable except the doors and the beams, which for a considerable height from the ground supported the roofs, formed of cement, resting on kiln-burnt bricks, were as effectually destroyed as the thatched bungalows. Property which the miscreants could not carry off was thrown out and smashed into fragments, evidently pounded with heavy clubs."—*Report of Commissioner Williams.*

1857. May 11. The day after.

But the Meerut Brigade did nothing more in the clear morning light than it had done in the shadow of the darkness. The English troops, with the English leaders, rose from the bivouac; and it dawned upon them that more than two thousand mutineers had made their way to Delhi. Even then, if the Carabineers and the Horse Artillery had been let loose, they might, before noon, have reached the imperial city and held mutiny in check. But cotemporary annals record only that the European troops, Horse, Foot, and Artillery, went out for a reconnaissance "on the right of the Delhi road." Not a man was despatched to the place which was the great centre of political intrigue and political danger—which was the great palatial home of the last representative of the House of Timour, and which held a large body of Native troops, and the great magazine of Upper India, unprotected by even a detachment of Europeans. Nor less surprising was it, that, with all these shameful proofs of the great crimes which had been committed, the rising indignation in the breasts of our English leaders did not impel them to inflict terrible retribution upon other criminals. The Bazaars on that Monday morning must have been full of the plundered property of our people, and of many dreadful proofs and signs of complicity in the great crime of the preceding night. Retribution might have fallen on many of the murderers red-handed; but not a regiment was let loose upon the guilty quarter. The murdered bodies were collected and laid out in the Theatre, where a mimic tragedy was to have been performed that evening; and the slayers of women and children, and the desecrators of our homesteads, were suffered to enjoy unmolested the fruits of their work;*

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* "It is a marvellous thing that, with the dreadful proof of the night's work in every direction, though groups of savages were actually

1857. May 11.

whilst the Meerut Brigade, Horse, Foot, and Artillery, marched about Cantonments, and looked at the Delhi road along which the mutineers had made good their escape.*

What might have been done by our people to overtake the guilty actors in the tragedy of that Sunday night, and to strike awe into the hearts of all who were minded to follow in the same track, may be gathered from an individual example, the record of which lies before me. It has been narrated how Mrs. Chambers, wife of the Adjutant of the Eleventh, was foully murdered in her bungalow. One of her husband's friends, Lieutenant Möller of the same regiment, obtained soon afterwards what appeared to be good evidence that a certain butcher of the Great Bazaar was the assassin. On this he started in his buggy for the Bazaar, tracked out the guilty man, seized him, and carried him back to cantonments with a loaded pistol at his head. A drum-head court-martial was assembled, and whilst Chambers lay in convulsions in an adjoining room, the wretch was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. And in a little while his lifeless body was swinging from the branch of a mango-tree.† There may, at this time, have been other examples of individual courage and resolution of the same stern character, as there were afterwards in all parts of the disturbed country; but the arm of authority was not uplifted to strike, and the multitude of criminals escaped.

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seen gloating over the mangled and mutilated remains of the victims, the column did not take immediate vengeance on the Sudder Bazaar and its environs, crowded as the whole place was with wretches hardly concealing their fiendish satisfaction, and when there were probably few houses from which plundered property might not have been recovered. But the men were restrained; the bodies were collected and placed in the theatre, in which a Dramatic Tragedy would have been enacted, but for the real and awful one which occurred the night before."—*Report of Commissioner Williams.*

* See statement of Colonel Smyth, quoted *ante*, page 64, note.

† This was on the 14th of May.

1857. May 11. Indeed, wheresoever a number of Englishmen are gathered together there will surely be deeds of gallantry, many and great, though they may be obliterated by the hand of death or lost in the confusion of the hour. And Meerut saw many acts of personal bravery done by our people which will never perhaps find sufficient record.* Nor should it be forgotten that many noble instances of gratitude and generosity, or it might perhaps have been only of common humanity, were apparent in the conduct of the Natives, who, whilst their brethren were striking, put forth their hands to save, and risked their own lives to protect those of the people whose only crime it was that they had white faces.†

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* "The firm bearing of the Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General, who stood by his office till his house was in flames, and a young officer rushed in with his lower jaw shattered by a musket-ball, and it was evident that the mutinous guard would abstain no longer; the gallant resistance of the Executive Engineer, Grand Trunk Road; the courage with which at least one woman attacked and wounded her assailants — these and many other instances of the fortitude with which our countrymen and countrywomen met the unexpected onslaught, deserve notice, but cannot be detailed in such a narrative."—*Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams. Unpublished Correspondence.*

† "Two Sepoys of the Eleventh Native Infantry most carefully escorted two ladies, with children, to the Dragoon Barracks. A Mahomedan in the city sheltered two Christian families, when the act was not only a singular deviation from the general conduct of his sect, but one full of danger to himself. A female servant and washerman succeeded in saving the young children of a lady, whom also they were attempting to save veiled in Native clothes, when a ruffian drew open the veil, saw the pale face, and cut the poor mother to pieces."—*Ibid.*

CHAPTER III.

THE MEERUT MUTINEERS AT DELHI—EVENTS AT THE PALACE—PROGRESS OF INSURRECTION—STATE OF THE BRITISH CANTONMENT—MUTINY OF THE DELHI REGIMENTS—THE EXPLOSION OF THE MAGAZINE—ESCAPE OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS—MASSACRE OF THE PRISONERS.

1857. May 11. The ride to Delhi.

WHILST the Meerut Brigade were bivouacking on the great parade-ground, the troopers of the Third Cavalry, scarcely drawing rein on the way, were pricking on, in hot haste, all through the moonlit night for Delhi. And the foot regiments were toiling on laboriously behind them, making rapid progress under the impulse of a great fear. It is hard to believe that on that Sabbath evening a single Native soldier had discharged his piece without a belief, in his inmost heart, that he was going straight to martyrdom. A paroxysm of suicidal insanity was upon them. They were in a great passion of the Present, and were reckless of the Future. But the sound of the carbines and the rifles and the roar of the guns, with their deadly showers of grape and canister, must have been ringing in their ears, and they must have felt that they were lost hopelessly. And now, as they speeded onwards in the broad moonlight, they must have listened for the noise of the pursuing Dragoons, and must have felt, in their panic flight, that the Europeans would soon be upon them. But hour after hour passed, and there was no sound of pursuit; and soon after break of day they saw the waters of the

1857. May 11. Jumna glittering in the morning sun, and the great City of Refuge rose encouragingly before them. Before eight o'clock, the foremost troopers had crossed the river by the bridge of boats, had cut down the toll-keeper, had fired the toll-house, had slain a solitary Englishman who was returning to Delhi across the bridge; and under the windows of the King's Palace they were now clamouring for admittance, calling upon his Majesty for help, and declaring that they had killed the English at Meerut and had come to fight for the Faith.

At the Palace. Hearing their cry, the King summoned to his presence Captain Douglas, the Commandant of the Palace Guards. In the Hall of Audience, supporting his tottering limbs with a staff, the aged monarch met the English Captain. Douglas said that he would descend and speak to the troopers; but the King implored him not to go, lest his life should be sacrificed, and laying hold of one of his hands, whilst Ahsan-oollah, the King's physician, took the other, imperatively forbade him to go down to the gate. Then Douglas went out on a balcony and told the troopers to depart, as their presence was an annoyance to the King. He might as well have spoken to the winds. Baffled at one point, they made good their entrance at another. It was in vain to tell them to close the gates, there were so many; and the Guards were not to be trusted. It happened that the Thirty-eighth Sepoy Regiment was then on duty in the city—that regiment which had successfully defied the Government when it had been designed to send it across the Black Water.* Already were they prepared to cast in their lot with the mutineers. The Calcutta Gate was the nearest to the bridge of boats; but when this was closed, the

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* See *ante*, vol. i. pages 461, 462.

1857.
May 11.

troopers made their way along the road that runs between the palace walls and the river to the Rajghat Gate, which was opened to them by the Mahomedans of the Thauba-Bazaar, and they clattered into the town.

Progress of the Insurrection.

Then ensued a scene of confusion which it is difficult to describe. Cutting down every European they could find, and setting fire to their houses, they doubled back towards the Calcutta Gate, where they learnt that Commissioner Fraser, Douglas of the Palace Guards, and other leading Englishmen would be found. As they rode on, with the cry of "Deen Deen!" they were followed by an excited Mahomedan rabble. The citizens closed their shops in amazement and terror, and from one end of Delhi to the other, as the news ran along the streets, there was sore bewilderment and perplexity, and everybody looked for the coming of the pursuing Englishmen, and feared that they would inflict a terrible retribution upon the city that had harboured the guilty fugitives. But no English regiments were coming to the rescue. And these maddened Native troopers, with such vile followers as they could gather up in the streets of Delhi, were now masters of the city. They knew that throughout all the Sepoy regiments in cantonments there was not a man who would pull a trigger, or draw a sword, or light a port-fire in defence of his English officer. Without a fear, therefore, they rushed on, scenting the English blood, eager for the larger game, and ever proclaiming as they went glory to the Padishah and death to the Feringhees.

Whilst the Meerut mutineers were coming up from the farther end of the long line of palace buildings, Commissioner Fraser at the other end was vainly endeavouring to secure the loyalty of the Sepoy Guards.

1857. May 11. Captain Douglas also had gone forth on the same vain errand. But it was soon clear that they were powerless. The troopers came upon them, and the Thirty-eighth, heedless of Fraser's appeals, fraternised with the new comers. Words now were nothing; authority was nothing. In the face of that surging multitude, increasing in numbers and in fury every moment, the English gentlemen felt that they carried their lives in their hands. When the leading troopers galloped up, Fraser and Douglas were in a buggy together; but seeing the danger that beset them, they descended and made for the gate of the civil guard-house, or police-station, where other Englishmen joined them. Taking a musket from one of the Guards, Fraser shot the foremost of the troopers dead, and those who followed, seeing their comrade drop, fell back a little space; but the multitude behind pressed on, and it was soon apparent that safety was to be found only in flight. Fraser then re-entered his buggy and drove for the Lahore Gate of the Palace, whilst Douglas flung himself into the ditch of the Fort, and though severely injured by the fall, thus sheltered from the fire of the enemy, crept towards the Palace Gate. Some Chuprassies of the Palace Guard, who had followed him, lifted him up, almost powerless from the injuries he had received, and one of them took the Captain on his shoulders and carried him into the Palace. Presently Fraser and Hutchinson, the Collector, who had been wounded at the commencement of the affray, arrived also at the Palace.*

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* All this is necessarily given upon native evidence, adduced at the trials of the King of Delhi and Moghul Beg. In some respects the statements are contradictory. One witness says that Mr. Hutchinson accompanied Captain Douglas; another, that he arrived with Mr. Fraser. A third says, that as soon as Captain Douglas was able to speak, he ordered his Chuprassies to search for Mr. Hutchinson and bring him into the Palace.

1857. May 11. Murder of Mr. Fraser.

In the apartments occupied by Captain Douglas, there were then residing, as his guests, Mr. Jennings, the English Chaplain, Miss Jennings, his daughter, and a young lady named Clifford, a friend of the latter. Mr. Jennings had from an early hour of the morning been watching through a telescope the advance of the Meerut mutineers, and he knew that there was mischief in the wind. Hearing a noise, he went below, and found that Captain Douglas had just been brought in and placed on a stone-seat in a lower Court. Under his directions, Douglas and Hutchinson were carried by some of the Palace Guards up the staircase to the apartments over the gateway,* whilst Fraser remained below, endeavouring to allay the excitement. Standing at the foot of the stairs, with a sword in his hand, the last-named was addressing a noisy crowd, when a man named Moghul Beg, an orderly of the Palace Guards, rushed upon him and clove his cheek to the bone.† The others followed up the attack, cutting at him with their swords, and presently Simon Fraser, Commissioner, lay a corpse at the foot of the stairs.

Murder of the Jenningses.

Meanwhile, in the upper rooms, Douglas and Hutchinson were lying in grievous pain, and the Jennings family were ministering to them. The excited crowd, having murdered the Commissioner, now rushed up the staircase, eager for the blood of the other English gentlemen. An attempt was made to

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* Some statements are to the effect that Mr. Jennings and Mr. Hutchinson carried Douglas up-stairs.

† Here, again, there is discordant evidence. On the trial of the King, it was more than once stated that the first blow was struck by one Hadjee, a lapidary or seal-engraver, who (according to one witness) "inflicted a deep and mortal wound on the right side of his neck." But at the trial of Moghul Beg, five years afterwards (1862), it was stated by one Buktawuss Sing that he "saw the prisoner inflict the first wound which was on Mr. Fraser's face." Another witness, Kishun Singh, also stated, "I saw the prisoner strike the first blow." See further statements in the Appendix.

1857. May 11. close the doors at the head of the staircases, but the murderous gang forced their way upwards, streamed into the rooms where Douglas, Hutchinson, Jennings, and the innocent young Englishwomen were listening with dismay to the tumult below, and, before a prayer could be lifted up, had massacred them with exultant ferocity. It was quickly done. A brief and bloody murder, terrible to contemplate, then stained the Delhi Palace; but no circumstances of shameful outrage aggravated the horror of the deed.*

There was then a scene of fearful uproar and confusion, which filled the old King with bewilderment and terror. The murderers, with their blood-stained swords in their hands, went about boasting of their crimes, and calling upon others to follow their example. The court-yards and the corridors of the Palace were swarming with the mutineers of the Third Cavalry and of the Thirty-eighth, and soon the Meerut Infantry Regiments† began to swell the dangerous crowd, whilst an excited Mahomedan rabble mingled with the Sepoys and the Palace Guards. The troopers stabled their horses in the Courts of the Palace. The foot-men, weary with the long night march, turned the Hall of Audience into a barrack, and littered down on the floor. Guards were posted all about the Palace. And the wretched, helpless King found that his royal dwelling-house was in military occupation.

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* It was stated, and for some time believed, that the English ladies had been dragged before the King, and either murdered in his presence or by his orders, and some highly dramatic incidents have been published illustrative of this complicity of the Mogul in the first murders. But there is not the least foundation for these stories. On the other hand, it is on evidence that Captain Douglas, shortly before his death, sent a message to the King, requesting him to send palanquins to remove the ladies to the Queen's apartments, and that he did so—but too late.

† There is considerable diversity of statement relating to the hour at which the Meerut Infantry Regiments arrived.

1857. May 11.

Whilst these events were passing within the precincts of the Palace, in the quarter of the city most inhabited by the English residents, the work of carnage and destruction was proceeding apace. It is not easy to fix the precise hour at which each particular incident in the dreadful catalogue of crime and suffering occurred. But it seems to have been under the meridian sun that the principal unofficial Englishmen in Delhi fell victims to the fury of the enemy. About noon the Delhi Bank was attacked and plundered, and all its chief servants, after a brave resistance, massacred. Mr. Beresford, the manager of the Bank, took refuge with his wife and family on the roof of one of the outbuildings. And there, for some time, they stood at bay, he with a sword in his hand, ready to strike, whilst his courageous helpmate was armed with a spear. Thus, with resolute bravery, they defended the gorge of the staircase, until the assailants, seeing no hope of clearing the passage, retired to scale the walls in the rear of the house. The attack was then renewed, but still the little party on the roof made gallant resistance. It is related by an eye-witness that one man fell dead beneath the lady's spear. But to resist was but to protract the pains of death. They were overpowered and killed, and the Bank was gutted from floor to roof. The Delhi Press establishment shared the same fate. The Christian compositors had gathered there, in pursuance of their craft; and never, perhaps, since the first dawn of printing, had work been done, sadder and grimmer than this—for it was theirs to record in type that the hand of death was upon them. The telegraph had brought in the early morning tidings that the Meerut mutineers were hastening to Delhi, and would soon be at the city gates. Some

The Delhi Bank

The Delhi Press.

1857. May 11. must have felt then that they were composing their own death-warrants. The little slips of printed paper—Delhi Gazette "Extras"—went forth, and the printers remained to meet the crisis, which they had just announced. About mid-day a crowd of Insurgents rushed into the office, killed all the Christian compositors, who could not effect their escape, and with clubs and poles destroyed the house and its contents, taking away all the type that they could carry, to turn to another and a deadlier use. Everywhere the Christian people were butchered, their property was plundered or destroyed, and then their houses were fired.* The Church was an especial object of the fury of the insurgents. They gloated over the desecration of all that was held in reverence by our Christian people. They tore down and shattered the monumental slabs on the walls; they seized the sacramental plate; then they ascended to the belfry, rang a peal in derision, and, loosening or cutting the ropes, let the bells fall with a crash on the stones below.

Events in Cantonments. Meanwhile, there was great excitement in the British Cantonments, where the Sepoy regiments of the Company were posted. Our military force was cantoned on a Ridge overlooking the great city, at a distance of about two miles from it. There had during the preceding week been no symptoms of inquietude

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* "Private houses were entered by troopers (their horses being held at the gates of the gardens), who said they did not come for *loot* but *life*, and when they were disappointed in their greed for European life, they let in the budmashes of the city, who, in the space of half an hour, cleared out the best-regulated houses from punkah to floor-cloth. They then either set fire to the house, or, if it were not of an inflammable nature, they pulled out the doors and window-frames, &c., in some cases the beams from the roofs."—*Mr. Wagentreiber's Narrative.*

1857. May 11.

among them. Some Native officers from the Delhi regiments had been sitting on the great Meerut Court-Martial; but how far they sympathised with the prisoners cannot be confidently declared. It would have been strange, however, if what had happened at Barrackpore and Berhampore had not been discussed at Meerut, and if the Native officers had not carried back with them that uneasy feeling of the something coming which was rapidly spreading from station to station. It is certain, however, that on the afternoon of the Christian Sabbath, which saw at Meerut the first great baptism of blood, a carriage arrived in the Delhi cantonments full of Natives, who, though not in regimental uniform, were known to be Sepoys from Meerut.* What was said or done in the Lines on that evening and during the ensuing night can only be conjectured. But the following morning found every regiment ripe for revolt.

At the early sunrise parade of that day all the troops in the Delhi Cantonments—the Thirty-eighth, the Fifty-fourth, and Seventy-fourth Regiments, with the Native Artillery—were assembled to hear the proceedings of the Court-Martial on Issuree Pandy, the Barrackpore Jemadar† read aloud; and as they were read, there arose from the assembled Sepoys a murmur of disapprobation. There was nothing beyond this; but some officers in Cantonments, who had been eagerly watching the signs of the times, felt that a crisis was approaching. At the early breakfast, however, where our officers met each other, after morning parade, at mess-houses or private bungalows, there was the wonted amount of light-hearted conversation and careless laughter. And when they separated, and

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* See evidence of Captain Tytler at the trial of the King of Delhi.

† Issuree Pandy had been hanged on April 22nd.—*Ante* vol. i., p. 584.

1857. May 11. each man went to his home to bathe and dress, and prepare for the larger breakfast and the business or the pleasure of the morning, it was not thought that the day would differ from other days. But before the work of the toilet was at an end, our people were startled by the tidings that the Native Cavalry from Meerut were forcing their way into the city. Native servants and Sepoy orderlies carried the news to their officers, and every man hurried on his clothes, feeling that there was work before him. But even then the prevailing idea was that there had been an escape from gaol; no more. No one thought that there was danger to an Empire. If, it was said, the troops at Meerut had mutinied, the strong body of Europeans there—the Rifles, the Carabineers, and the white Artillery—would surely have been upon their track. It was not possible that more than a few fugitives could ever reach Delhi.

Colonel Ripley and the Fifty-fourth. So argued our officers on the Delhi Ridge, as they listened to the bugle-call and buckled on their swords. The Fifty-fourth were ordered out for service, and two of De Tessier's guns were to accompany them to the city. It was necessarily a work of time to get the field-pieces ready for action; so Ripley, leaving two companies to escort the Artillery, marched down to the nearest gate. This was the Cashmere Gate. A little way on the other side of it was the Main-guard, at which some men of the Thirty-eighth were posted. They had already in their hearts cast in their lot with the mutineers, and when Ripley appeared with the Fifty-fourth, the time for action had come, and they threw off then the last remnant of disguise. The troopers of the Third Cavalry, with the insurgent rabble from the town, were surging onwards towards the gate. The Fifty-fourth, who had brought down their pieces unloaded, now received the order to load; and meanwhile, Captain Wallace, acting as field-officer of the day, who had taken command of the Main-guard, ordered the Thirty-eighth to fire upon the mutineers. To this they responded only with insulting sneers. Not a man brought his musket to the "present." 1857. May 11.

This was the turning-point of the great disaster. The Fifty-fourth were scarcely less faithless than their comrades. They fired in the air, and some, perhaps, fired upon their officers.* After shooting two of the insurgents, Ripley was cut down, and near him fell also the lifeless bodies of Smith and Burrowes, Edwards and Waterfield. When the two companies in the rear approached the Cashmere Gate with the guns, they met Captain Wallace riding in hot haste towards them; he begged them, for mercy's sake, to hurry on, as the troopers were shooting down our officers. Soon they had ghastly evidence of this dismal truth, for the mangled body of their Colonel was being brought out, "literally hacked to pieces." Paterson then ordered his men to load, and pushed on with all speed to the gate. But the report of the approach of the guns had already awed the mutineers, and when they passed the gate, our officers found no trace of the enemy whom they had come to attack, except in the receding figures of a few troopers, who were scampering towards the city. But they found most miserable traces of the preceding conflict, in the dead bodies of their comrades, which were scattered about the place. These were now brought in to the Main-guard, before which the guns had been planted,

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* There seems to be some doubt about the conduct of the Fifty-fourth in this first collision. It is stated, however, that Colonel Ripley declared that his own men had bayoneted him.

1857. May 11.

and the two companies of the Fifty-fourth posted as a garrison. And there they remained hour after hour, gaining no assured intelligence of the movements of the rebels, and ever cheerful in the thought that aid from Meerut, with its strong European force, must certainly be close at hand.

Major Abbott and the Seventy-fourth.

Meanwhile, Captain Wallace had been directed by Major Paterson to bring up the Seventy-fourth Regiment, with two more guns. Major Abbott, on gaining intelligence of the defection of the Thirty-eighth, and the doubtful conduct of the Fifty-fourth, mounted his horse, hastened to the Lines of his regiment, and addressed his men. He told them that the time had come for them to prove that they were true and loyal soldiers; and he called for volunteers to accompany him down to the Cashmere Gate. There was not a man there who did not come to the front; and when the order was given to load, they obeyed it with befitting alacrity. Then they marched down, with two more guns, under Lieutenant Aislabie, and about mid-day were welcomed by Paterson and his party at the Main-guard. The force at this post had now been strengthened by the return of some Sepoys of the Fifty-fourth, who had gone off in the confusion, and, having roamed about for some time in a state of bewilderment and panic, had at last turned back to the point from which they had started, hanging on to the skirts of circumstance, wondering what would be the result, and waiting to see whether a retributive force from Meerut was sweeping into the City of the Mogul.

At the Main-guard.

Time passed, and the slant shadows thrown by the descending sun were falling upon the Main-guard. Yet still no authentic intelligence of what was passing in the city reached our expectant officers, except that which was conveyed to them by European fugitives who sought safety there from other parts of the city. Scared and bewildered they had come in, each with some story of an escape from death, providential—almost miraculous. But there was little room for rejoicing, as it seemed to them that they had been saved from old dangers only to encounter new. At the Main-guard they were surrounded by Sepoys, waiting only a fitting opportunity to disencumber themselves of the last remnant of their outward fidelity. At any moment they might break out into open revolt, and shoot down the Europeans of both sexes congregated in the enclosure. It was a time of intense anxiety. It was evident that the insurrection was raging in the city. There was a confused roar, presaging a great tumult, and smoke and fire were seen ascending from the European quarter. 1857. May 11.

Then there was, at intervals, a sound of Artillery, the meaning of which was not correctly known, and then a tremendous explosion, which shook the Main-guard to its very foundation. Looking to the quarter whence the noise proceeded, they saw a heavy column of smoke obscuring the sky; and there was no doubt in men's minds that the great Magazine had exploded —whether by accident or design could only be conjectured. But whilst the party in the guard-house were speculating on the event, two European officers joined them, one of whom was so blackened with smoke that it was difficult to discern his features. They were Artillery subalterns, who had just escaped from the great explosion. The story which it was theirs to tell is one which will never be forgotten.

Explosion of the Magazine.

The great Delhi Magazine, with all its vast supplies of munitions of war, was in the city at no great

1857. May 11. distance from the Palace. It was in charge of Lieutenant George Willoughby, of the Ordnance Commissariat Department, with whom were associated Lieutenants Forrest and Raynor, also officers of the Bengal Artillery, and six European Conductors and Commissariat Sergeants. All the rest of the establishment was Native. Early morning work is a condition of Anglo-Indian life, and Willoughby was at the Magazine superintending the accustomed duties of his department, and little dreaming what the day would bring forth, when Forrest came in accompanied by the magistrate, Sir Thomas Metcalfe, and informed him that the Meerut mutineers were streaming across the river. It was Metcalfe's object to obtain from the Magazine a couple of guns wherewith to defend the Bridge. But it was soon apparent that the time for such defence had passed. The troopers had crossed the river, and had found ingress at the Palace Gate. A brave and resolute man, who, ever in the midst of danger, seemed almost to bear a charmed life, Metcalfe then went about other work, and Willoughby braced himself up for the defence of the Magazine. He knew how much depended on its safety. He knew that not only the mutinous soldiery, but the dangerous classes of Delhi, would pour down upon the Magazine, some eager to seize its accumulated munitions of war, others greedy only for plunder. If, he thought, he could hold out but a little while, the white regiments at Meerut would soon come to his aid, and a strong guard of English Riflemen with guns manned by European artillerymen, would make the Magazine secure against all comers. It was soon plain that the Native establishment of the Magazine was not to be trusted. But there were nine resolute Englishmen who calmly prepared themselves to face the tremendous odds which threatened them, and, if the sacrifice were required, to die beneath the ruins of the Magazine. Cheered by the thought of the approaching succour from Meerut, these brave men began their work. The outer gates were closed and barricaded. Guns were then brought out, loaded with double charges of grape, and posted within the gates. One of the Nine, with port-fire in hand, stood ready to discharge the contents of the six-pounders full upon the advancing enemy if they should find their way into the enclosure. These arrangements completed, a train was laid from the powder-magazine, and on a given signal from Willoughby, if further defence should be hopeless, a match was to be applied to it, and the Magazine blown into the air. 1857. May 11.

Whilst in this attitude of defence, a summons to surrender came to them in the name of the King. It was treated with contemptuous silence. Again and again messengers came from the Palace saying that his Majesty had ordered the gates to be opened, and the stores given up to the Army. If not, ladders would be sent, and the Magazine would be carried by escalade. Unmoved by these menaces, Willoughby and Forrest answered nothing, but looked to their defences; and presently it was plain that the scaling-ladders had arrived. The enemy were swarming over the walls. At this point all the natives in the Magazine, the gun-lascars, the artificers and others whose defection had been expected, threw off their disguise, and, ascending some sloping sheds, joined the enemy on the other side.

The time for vigorous action had now arrived. As the enemy streamed over the walls, round after round of murderous grape-shot from our guns, delivered with all the coolness and steadiness of a practice-

1857. May 11. parade, riddled the advancing multitudes; but still they poured on, keeping up a heavy fire of musketry from the walls.* Yet hoping almost against hope to hear the longed-for sound of the coming help from Meerut, the devoted Englishmen held their ground until their available ammunition was expended. Then further defence was impossible; they could not leave the guns to bring up shot from the Magazine, and there were none to help them. Meanwhile, the mutineers were forcing their way at other unprotected points into the great enclosure, and it was plain that the Nine—two among them wounded, though not disabled, for the strong will kept them at their posts—could no longer hold the great storehouse from the grasp of the enemy. So the signal was given. Conductor Scully fired the train. In a few seconds there was a tremendous explosion. The Magazine had been blown into the air.

Not one of that gallant band expected to escape with his life. But four of the Nine, in the confusion which ensued, though at first stunned and bewildered, shattered and bruised, made good their retreat from the ruins. Willoughby and Forrest, it has been seen, escaped to the Main-guard. Raynor and Buckley took a different direction, and eventually reached Meerut. Scully and his gallant comrades were never seen alive again. But the lives thus nobly sacrificed were dearly paid for by the enemy. Hundreds perished in that great explosion; and others at a distance were struck down by the fragments of the building, or by bullets flung from the cartridges ignited in store. But it was not possible that by any such explosion as this the immense material resources

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* The assailants appear to have been principally Sepoys of the Eleventh and Twentieth Regiments from Meerut.

1857. May 11.

of the great Delhi Magazine should be so destroyed as to be unserviceable to the enemy. The effect of the heroic deed, which has given to those devoted Nine a cherished place in History, can never be exactly computed. But the grandeur of the conception is not to be measured by its results. From one end of India to another it filled men's minds with enthusiastic admiration; and when news reached England that a young Artillery officer named Willoughby had blown up the Delhi Magazine, there was a burst of applause that came from the deep heart of the nation. It was the first of many intrepid acts which have made us proud of our countrymen in India; but its brilliancy has never been eclipsed.

Progress of mutiny in Cantonments.

In the British Cantonment on the Ridge a column of white smoke was seen to arise from the city, and presently the sound of the explosion was heard. It was then four o'clock. Brigadier Graves and the officers under him had been exerting themselves to keep together such of the troops as had not marched down to the Delhi City, ever hoping that the Europeans from Meerut would soon come to their relief, and wondering why they were so long in making their appearance. It seemed strange, but it was possible, that the extent of the danger was not appreciated by General Hewitt; strange that it should be necessary to send for succours to Meerut, and yet, as the day advanced and no help came, it clearly had become necessary to appeal for the aid which ought to have been freely and promptly sent. Then one brave man stepped forward and offered to carry a letter to the General at Meerut. This was Doctor Batson, the Surgeon of the Seventy-fourth Regiment. The gallant

1857. May 11. offer was accepted. The letter was written, and placed in Batson's hands. He took leave of his wife and children, whom he might never see again, disguised himself as a Fakeer, and set forth on his perilous journey. But well as he played his part, and able as he was to speak the language of the country as fluently as his own, he had not proceeded far before his disguise was penetrated; the colour of his eyes had betrayed him. He was fired upon by the Sepoys, robbed and stripped by the villagers, and finally cast adrift, to wander about naked and hungry, weary and footsore, passing through every kind of peril, and enduring every kind of pain.

All day long the Sepoys in the Cantonment had been hovering upon the brink of open mutiny. They had committed no acts of violence against their officers, but, like their comrades at the Main-guard, though held back by the fear of the white regiments that were expected from Meerut, they were festering with the bitterness of national hatred, and eager to strike. The ladies and children had been gathered up and sheltered in a place known as the Flag-staff Tower.* There two of De Tessier's guns were posted; but the Native gunners were not to be trusted, and besides the officers, there were only nineteen Europeans, or Christians, in the Cantonment. It was felt that at any moment a crisis might arrive, when nothing but a sudden flight could save the lives of this little handful of our people. The explosion of the Magazine seems to have brought on the inevitable moment, when the last links that bound the Native soldiery to their European officers were to be broken. 1857. May 11.

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* This Flagstaff tower became afterwards very celebrated in the history of the siege of Delhi. On that 11th of May it was little better than a "Black Hole." The scene within the tower is thus described by an eye-witness:—"Here we found a large number of ladies and children collected in a round room some eighteen feet in diameter. Servants, male and female, were huddled together with them; many ladies were in a fainting condition from extreme heat and nervous excitement, and all wore that expression of anxiety so near akin to despair. Here were widows mourning their husbands' murder, sisters weeping over the report of a brother's death, and some there were whose husbands were still on duty in the midst of the disaffected Sepoys, of whose fate they were as yet ignorant. It was a black hole in miniature, with all but the last horrible features of that dreadful prison, and I was glad even to stand in the sun to catch a breath of fresh air." —*Mr. Wagentreiber's Narrative.*

Events at the Main-guard.

At the Main-guard in the City, as in the Cantonment on the Ridge, the same process was going on in the light of the setting sun. The disaffection of the Delhi regiments had ripened into general mutiny. The last restraints were flung aside under an assumed conviction that the Europeans from Meerut were not coming to avenge their slaughtered brethren. The great national cause was swelling into portentous external dimensions under the inflations of the King and Princes, and others of stronger lungs than their own. Everywhere it had been noised about from early morning that the King was on the side of the mutineers, and that to fight against the English was to fight for the King—to fight for the restoration of the Mogul throne—to fight for the religion of the Prophet. And as the day advanced, there were more unmistakable signs that this was neither an invention nor a delusion. The inmates of the Palace, timid, feeble, effete as they were, had plainly risen against the dominant Christian power. The yoke of the Feringhees was to be cast off. The time had come when all the great offices of State would again be filled by the people of the East—by Mahomedans and Hindoos, under the restored dynasty of the Moguls. And whilst many were inspired by these sentiments, many also were moved by a great lust of plunder; and as the sun neared the horizon, and still there

1857. May 11. were no signs of the avenging Englishmen on the road from Meerut, massacre and spoliation were safe and easy, and all the scum of Delhi, therefore, was seen upon the surface of the rebellion.

To hold out any longer against such overwhelming odds was now wholly impossible. At the Main-guard the massacre of our people was commenced by a volley from the Thirty-eighth, delivered with terrible effect into the midst of them. Gordon, the field-officer of the day, fell from his horse with a musket-ball in his body, and died without a groan. Smith and Reveley of the Seventy-fourth, were shot dead.* That any Christian person escaped amidst the shower of musketry that was poured upon them seemed to be a miraculous deliverance. There was now nothing left to the survivors but to seek safety in flight. There was but one means of escape, and that a perilous, almost a hopeless, one. There was an embrasure in the bastion skirting the court-yard of the Main-guard, through which egress might be obtained, and by dropping down into the ditch—a fall of some thirty feet—and ascending the opposite scarp, the slope of the glacis might be gained, beyond which there was some jungle, which might afford cover to the fugitives till nightfall. Young and active officers, not crippled by wounds, might accomplish this; but the despairing cries of some Englishwomen from the inner rooms of the Guard-house, reminded them that they could not think wholly of themselves. To remain in the Guard was to court death. The mutineers were not only firing upon our people with their muskets, but pointing their guns at us. The only hope left was a descent into the ditch, but even that was more like despair. So the women were brought to the embrasure, and whilst in terror and confusion they were discussing the possibility of the descent, a round-shot passed over their heads, and they felt that there was not a moment to be lost. The officers then fastened their belts together, and thus aided, whilst some dropped into the ditch to receive the women, others helped them from above to descend. At last, not without much difficulty, aggravated by the terror of the poor creatures who were being rescued, the whole were lowered into the ditch; and then came the still more difficult task of ascending the opposite bank. The steepness of the ascent and the instability of the soil made their footing so insecure, that again and again they were foiled in the attempt to reach the summit. The earth gave way beneath them, and helping men and helpless women rolled back to the bottom of the ditch amidst a shower of crumbling earth. Despair, however, gave them superhuman energy, and at last the whole of our little party had surmounted the outer slope of the ditch, and were safe upon the crest of the glacis. Then they made their way into the jungle which skirted it, and pushed on, some in the direction of the Cantonments, and some in the direction of Metcalfe House. 1857. May 11.

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* "The latter (Reveley) had a loaded gun in his hand; he quietly raised himself up with a dying effort, and discharging both barrels into a knot of Sepoys below, the next moment expired."—*Lieutenant Vibart's Narrative.*

Meanwhile, in the British Cantonment on the Ridge our people had been reduced to the same extremity of despair. The Sepoys had turned upon them and now held possession of the guns. It was no longer possible to defend the place or to keep together even the few Native soldiers who were inclined to remain faithful, under the influence of old Escape from Cantonments.

1857. May 11.

habits and personal attachments. Two circumstances, however, were in favour of the English in Cantonments. One was, that the Sepoys at a distance from the Palace and the City were less acquainted with the extent to which the Royal Family and the Mahommedan citizens of Delhi were aiding and supporting the mutineers. The other was, that our officers, being at their homes, had facilities of conveyance—horses, and carriages, and carts—wherewith to carry off their families to Meerut or Kurnaul, with some provisions for the journey, and perhaps some of the remnant of their household gods. When first they moved off, there was a slight show or pretence of the Sepoys going with them. They fell in to the word of command, and, for a little space, accompanied the departing Englishmen; but soon the columns were broken up, the Sepoys streamed into the Bazaars, and all semblance of discipline was abandoned. Three or four officers, who had remained with them, tried to rally their men in vain. The Sepoys implored them to escape before the rabble from the city burst upon the Cantonment. Already, indeed, the English carriages had been lighted upon their way by the blaze of our burning bungalows. If the officers who were the last to quit the Cantonment could rescue the regimental colours, it was the most that they could hope to accomplish.*

The flight from Delhi.

So, forth from the Cantonment and forth from the City went our fugitive people. Many narratives of deep and painful interest have been written, descriptive of the sufferings which they endured, and the dangers which they encountered. It has been narrated how they hid themselves now in the jungle, now in the ruins of uninhabited buildings; how they tore off their epaulettes or other bright appendages of their uniform lest they should attract notice by glittering in the moonlight or the sunshine; how they crouched like hares in form, or hid themselves in gaps and hollows; how they were tracked and despoiled by robbers; how they were lured into seemingly friendly villages and then foully maltreated; how they waded through or swam rivers, carrying the women and children across as best they could; how they were beaten and stripped, and sent on their way under the fierce unclouded sun of the Indian summer, without clothing and without food; how they often laid themselves down at night weary, exhausted, and in sore pain, crouching close to each other for warmth, expecting, almost hoping that death would come at once to relieve them from their sufferings; how delicate women and young children struggled on, sometimes separated from their husbands or fathers, but ever finding consolation and support in the kindly and chivalrous ministrations of English gentlemen.* Some made good their way to Meerut, some to Kurnaul, some to Umballah. Others perished miserably on the road, and a few, unable to proceed, were left behind by their companions. This was the sorest trial of all that befel the fugitives. It went to the hearts of these brave men to abandon any of their fellow-sufferers who could not longer share their flight. But there was no help for it. So, once or twice, after vain endeavours to carry the helpless one to a place of safety, it was found that,

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* The last to quit the Cantonment were, apparently, Colonel Knyvett of the Thirty-eighth, Lieutenant Gambier, Captain Peile, and Captain Holland.

1857.
May 11—12.

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* And nobly the women played their parts, and not always as the weaker vessels. One published narrative relates how two ladies—Mrs. Wood and Mrs. Peile—saved a wounded officer, the husband of the former, who could not have moved onward without their support.

1857. May 11—12. with the enemy on their track, death to the Many must follow further efforts to save the One, and so the wretched creature was left behind to die.*

But truth would not be satisfied if it were not narrated here that many compassionate and kindly acts on the part of the Natives of the country relieved the darkness of the great picture of national crime. Many of the fugitives were succoured by people in the rural districts through which they passed, and sent on their way in safety. In this good work men of all classes, from great landholders to humble sweepers took part, and endangered their own lives by saving those of the hapless Christians.†

May 11—16. Massacre of Prisoners. Whilst these remnants of our British officers, with their wives and children, were thus miserably escaping from Delhi, there were others of our countrypeople, or co-religionists, who were in pitiable captivity there, awaiting death in a stifling dungeon. These were, for the most part, European or Eurasian inhabitants of the Darao-gunj, or English quarter of Delhi, engaged in commerce or trade. On the morning of the 11th of May, many of these people, hearing that the mutineers were crossing the bridge, gathered themselves in one of the "largest and strongest houses" occupied by our Christian people, and there barricaded themselves. These, however, and others, burnt or dragged out of their houses, escaped death only to be carried prisoners to the Palace, where they were confined in an underground apartment, without windows, and only one door, so that little either of air or light ever entered the dreary dwelling. There nearly fifty Christian people—men, women, and children—were huddled together, scantily fed, constantly threatened and insulted by the Sepoys and Palace-guards, but bearing up bravely beneath the burden of their sorrows. After four or five days of this suffering, a servant of the King asked one of the ladies in the dungeon how, if they were restored to power, the English would treat the Natives; and the answer was, "Just as you have treated our husbands and children." On the following day they were led forth to die. The Palace-guards came to the prison-door and told them to come forth, as they were to be taken to a better residence. Sorely mistrusting their guards, they crowded out of the dungeon. A rope was thrown round them, encircling the party so that none could escape. Then they were taken to a court-yard—the appointed shambles—where great crowds of people were gathered together to witness the massacre of the Christians. As they stood there, cursing the Feringhees and throwing up their jubilant cries, the work of slaughter commenced. It is not easy to tell the story with an assured belief in its truth. It seems, however, that the Nemesis of the Third Cavalry was there; that some of the troopers fired with carbine or pistol at the prisoners, but by mischance struck one of the King's retainers. Then there began a carnage at the sabre's edge. It is hard to say how it was done. Whether many or whether few swordsmen fell upon the Christians is uncertain.* But, in

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* See Lieutenant Vibart's Narrative.

† Mr. Williams, in his official report, gives a list—but not a complete one—of the Natives who succoured the Delhi fugitives. See also narrative of the escape of Captain T. W. Holland: "There being no milk in the village, one Pultoo sweeper, or others of his family, used daily to take the trouble to go to procure some from adjacent villages." Again: "I remained with Jumnadass (a Brahmin) six days. He gave me the best part of his house to live in, and the best food he could," &c. &c.

1857. May 11—16.

May 16.

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* One statement is to the effect that a hundred or a hundred and fifty men fell upon them with their swords; and another is, that two

1857. May 16. a brief space of time, fifty Christian people—men, women, and children—were remorselessly slain.* A sweeper, who had helped to dispose of the corpses, bore witness that there were only five or six men among them. The bodies were heaped up on a cart, borne to the banks of the Jumna, and thrown into the river.

So there was not, after that 16th of May, a single European left in Delhi, either in the Cantonment or in the City. The British had no longer any footing in the capital of the Mogul. We had been swept out by the great besom of destruction, and Behaudur Shah reigned in our place. Since the days of Suraf-ood-dowlah and the Black Hole, no such calamity had ever overtaken our people, and never since we first set foot on Indian soil any such dire disgrace. That a number of Christian people should be thus foully massacred was a great sorrow. but that nothing should be done to avenge the blood of our slaughtered countrymen was a far greater shame. The sorrow was at Delhi; the shame was at Meerut. The little band of Englishmen suddenly brought face to face with mutiny in the Lines, insurrection in the city, and revolution in the great teeming Palace of Delhi; who found, as their enemies on that May morning, six mutinous Sepoy Regiments, a hostile Mahomedan population, and the retainers of the old Mogul dynasty, with the King's name as the watchword, and the Princes as the leaders of the many-sided revolt, could not have done much more than they did to stem the tide that was rushing upon them. It was not possible that they should hold out for more

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swordsmen did the entire butchery by themselves.

* A woman (Mrs. Aldwell) with three children, escaped by feigning Mahomedanism.

than one dreadful day with such a power arrayed against them. Their doom had been sealed in the early morning. When the hoofs of the foremost troop-horse rung upon the bridge across the Jumna, the death-knell of the British was sounded. From morn to noon, from noon to sunset, still our people were sustained by a strong faith in the manhood of their countrymen, who, at a little distance, had Horse, and Foot, and a great strength of Artillery to bring to their succour. But when the sun went down, and there was no sign at Delhi of the approach of the Dragoons or the Galloper guns, they saw that they were deserted, and what could they do but fly? 1857. May.

But did the responsibility of this grievous inaction rest with General Hewitt or with Brigadier Wilson? The General has asserted that, as the command of the station was in the hands of the Brigadier, the movement of the troops depended upon him. But when a General Officer, commanding a division of the Army, thus shifts the responsibility on to the shoulders of a subordinate, he virtually seals his own condemnation. When, at a later period, Wilson was called upon by the supreme military authorities for a full explanation of the causes of the inaction of the European troops on the night of the 10th of May, and reference was made to what Hewitt had stated, the former wrote in reply, "I would beg to refer to the Regulations of the Bengal Army, Section XVII., which will show what little authority over the troops is given to the Brigadier commanding a station which is the Head-Quarters of a Division, and that I could not have exercised any distinct command, the Major-General being present on the occasion. As Brigadier, Question of responsibility.

1857. May. I only exercised the executive command of the troops under the orders of the Major-General." "I may or may not," he added, "have been wrong in offering the opinion I did to the Major-General. I acted to the best of my judgment at the time, and from the uncertainty regarding the direction taken by the fugitives, I still believe I was right. Had the Brigade blindly followed in the hope of finding the fugitives, and the remaining portion of the Cantonment been thereby sacrificed, with all our sick, women and children, and valuable stores, the outcry against those in command at Meerut would have been still greater than it has been."

Causes of Failure. This, in part, is the explanation of that first great failure, which so perplexed and astounded all who heard of it, and which led to great and disastrous results hereafter to be recorded. The military commanders at Meerut believed that it was their first duty to protect life and property in the Cantonment. The mutinous Sepoys, aided by the escaped convicts, and by ruffians and robbers from the bazaars and villages, had butchered men, women, and children, had burned and gutted the houses of the white people in the Native quarter of the Cantonment, and it was believed that, if due precautions were not taken, the other great half of military Meerut would share the same fate, that the Treasury would be plundered, and that the magazines would fall into the enemy's hands. To Wilson it was natural that the safety of the Cantonment should be his first care; but Hewitt commanded the whole Meerut division, including the great station of Delhi, with its immense magazine, and not a single European soldier to guard its profusion of military stores. It needed no breadth of vision, no forecaste to discern the tremendous danger which lay at the

1857. May.

distance only of a night's march from Meerut—danger not local, but national—danger no less portentous in its political than in its military aspects. But not an effort was made to intercept the fatal flood of mutiny that was streaming into Delhi. General Hewitt ignored the fact that the whole of the Meerut Division was under his military charge, and thinking only of the safety of the place in which he himself resided, he stood upon the defensive for many days, whilst the rebels of the Lines, of the Gaols, and the Bazaars, were rejoicing in the work that they had done with impunity equal to their success.

But the judgment of the historian would be but a partial—an imperfect—judgment, if it were to stop here. There is something more to be said. Beneath these personal errors, there lay the errors of a vicious system and a false policy. To bring this great charge against one Commander of a Division or another Commander of a Division, against one Commander-in-Chief or another Commander-in-Chief, against one Governor-General or another Governor-General, against this Department or against that Department, would be a mistake and an injustice. It was not this or that man that wanted wisdom. The evil lay broad and deep in the national character. The arrogance of the Englishman, which covered him ever with a great delusion, forbidding him to see danger when danger was surrounding him, and rendering it impossible in his eyes that any disaster should overtake so great and powerful a country, was the principal source of this great failure at Meerut. We were ever lapping and lulling ourselves in a false security. We had warnings, many and significant; but we brushed them away with a movement of impatience and contempt. There is a cant phrase, which, be-

1857. May. cause it is çant, it may be beneath the dignity of History to cite; but no other words in the English language, counted by scores or by hundreds, can so express the prevailing faith of the Englishman at that time, as those two well-known words "*All serene.*" Whatever clouds might lower—whatever tempests might threaten—still it was "All serene." It was held to be unbecoming an Englishman to be prepared for a storm. To speak of ugly signs or portents—to hint that there might be coming perils which it would be well to arm ourselves to encounter—was to be scouted as a feeble and dangerous alarmist. What had happened at Barrackpore and Berhampore might well have roused our people to cautious action. We had before seen storms burst suddenly upon us to our utter discomfiture and destruction; but we were not to be warned or instructed by them. When Henry Lawrence wrote, "How unmindful have we been that what occurred in the city of Caubul may some day occur at Delhi, Meerut, or Bareilly,"* no one heeded the prophetic saying any more than if he had prophesied the immediate coming of the day of judgment. Everything, therefore, at Meerut, in spite of plain and patent symptoms of an approaching outbreak, was in a state of utter unpreparedness for action. There were troopers without horses, troopers that could not ride—artillerymen without guns, and artillerymen who did not know a mortar from a howitzer, or the difference between round-shot and grape. This was not the fault of General Hewitt or Brigadier Wilson; it was the fault of the system—the policy. The prevailing idea, and one for which there was good war-

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* See *ante*, vol. i. p. 453.

1857. May.

rant, was, that the Government desired that things should be kept quiet. Even to have a battery of artillery equipped for immediate service was held to be a dangerous movement, that might excite alarm, and, perhaps, precipitate a crisis, which otherwise might be indefinitely delayed. When an officer of Artillery commanding one of the Meerut batteries sought permission, a few days before the outbreak, to load his ammunition-waggons, that he might be ready, in case of accident, for prompt service, he was told that such a step would excite suspicion among the natives, and that therefore it could not be sanctioned. And this may have been right. The wrong consisted in having allowed things to drift into such a state, that what ought to have been the rule was regarded as something altogether abnormal and exceptional, and as such, a cause of special alarm. The policy was to believe, or to pretend to believe, that our lines had been cast in pleasant places; and the system, therefore, was never to be prepared for an emergency—never to be ready to move, and never to know what to do. In pursuance of this system the Commander-in-Chief was in the great play-ground of Simlah, and the Chiefs of Departments were encouraging him in the belief that the cloud "would soon blow over." So officers of all ranks in the great Divisions of the Army in the North-West—in the Sirhind, in the Meerut, in the Cawnpore Divisions—did, according to the pattern of Head-Quarters, and according to their instincts as Englishmen; and, therefore, when the storm burst, we were all naked, defenceless, and forlorn, and knew not how to encounter its fury.

It has been contended that a prompt movement in pursuit of the mutineers might not have been suc-

1857. May.

cessful. And it is right that all circumstances of difficulty should be fully taken into account. Rebellion developed itself under the cover of the night. The mutineers dispersed themselves here and there, and our people knew not whither to follow them. The Cavalry, however, must have taken to the road, and where the native troopers could go, our Dragoons might have pursued them; but the former had a long start, and it is said that, as they would have been the first to enter Delhi, they would have destroyed the bridge across the Jumna; and that even if our Cavalry and Horse-Artillery had made their way into the City, they would have found themselves entangled in streets swarming with an armed rabble, stimulating and aiding the hostile Sepoy Regiments who had been prepared to welcome, and to cast in their lot with their comrades from Meerut. But it is to be observed, upon the other hand, that if the troopers of the Third Cavalry, who were the first to enter Delhi, had cut off the communication with Meerut, by destroying the bridge, they would have shut out large numbers of their own people, who were pouring, or rather dribbling, into Delhi all through the day. If the Meerut troops had arrived on the banks of the Jumna in a serried mass, under a capable commander, they would, when the whole had passed over, have destroyed the bridge, to cut off the pursuit of the enemy from Meerut. But straggling in at intervals, under no recognised chiefs, this was not to be expected; and if it had been done, a great part of the Meerut Infantry Regiments must have fallen into the hands of the pursuing Englishmen, and been destroyed by their grape shot or sabres within sight of the palace windows.

Question of pursuit considered.

But the mere military argument in such a case

1857. May.

does not dispose of the historical question; for it was from the moral no less than from the material effects of the pursuit that advantage was to be derived. The sight of a single white face above the crest of a parapet has ere now put a garrison to flight. And it may not unreasonably be assumed that, if on that Monday morning a few English Dragoons had been seen approaching the Jumna, it would have been believed that a large body of white troops were behind them, and rebellion, which was precipitated by our inactivity, would then have been suspended by the fear of the coming retribution. Unless the Dragoons and Horse-Artillery had headed the Sepoys, which was not indeed to be expected, the first sudden rush into Delhi must have occasioned wild confusion, and many lives must have been sacrificed to the fury of the troopers and the rabble of abettors. But the disaster would have been but limited—the defeat but temporary. It is doubtful whether, if the avenging Englishmen had, that morning, appeared under the walls of Delhi, the Sepoy Regiments stationed there would have broken into rebellion; and it is well nigh certain, that in the presence of the British troops the Royal Family of Delhi would not have dared to proclaim themselves on the side of the mutineers. All through the hours of the morning there was doubt and hesitation both in the Cantonments and in the Palace; and it was not until the sun was going down that it became manifest that Delhi was in the throes of a great revolution. Emboldened and encouraged by what seemed to be the sudden prostration of the English, our enemies saw that their time had come, whilst our friends lost confidence in our power and our fortune, and feared to declare themselves on our side. Better in that case for the English soldiers to

1857. May.

come to Delhi to be beaten than not to come at all. It was the want of effort at such a moment that did us such grievous harm. For from one station to another the news spread that the Sepoys had conquered the English at Meerut, and proclaimed the Mogul Emperor at Delhi. The first great blow had been struck at the Feringhees, and ever from place to place the rumour ran that they had been paralysed by it.*

Alleged conspiracy for a general rising.

There is another question to which, fitly here, a few sentences may be devoted. It has been said that, in looking at this great history of the Sepoy War as a whole, we shall not take just account of it, unless we consider that, inasmuch as there had been a conspiracy throughout the Bengal Native Army for a general rising of the Sepoys all over the country on a given day, the sudden outbreak at Meerut, which caused a premature development of the plot, and put the English on their guard before the appointed hour, was the salvation of the British Empire in India. Colonel Carmichael Smyth was ever assured in his own mind that, by evolving the crisis in the Third Cavalry Regiment, he had saved the Empire. It was his boast, and he desired that it should be made known to all men, that he might have the full credit of the act. And I am bound to say that there is high testimony in support of the belief thus confidently expressed. Mr. Cracroft Wilson, who was selected by the Supreme Government to fill the post of Special Commissioner, after the suppression of rebellion, with a view to the punishment of the guilty and the reward of the deserving, has placed

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* There is an expressive Hindostanee word in very common currency among both Europeans and Natives on the Bengal side of India —"*lachar*," or helpless. It was currently said that the English were *lachar*.

1857. May.

upon record his full belief in this story of a general conspiracy for a simultaneous rising. "Carefully collating," he has written, "oral information with facts as they occurred, I am convinced that Sunday, 31st of May, 1857, was the day fixed for mutiny to commence throughout the Bengal Army; that there were committees of about three members in each regiment which conducted the duties, if I may so speak, of the mutiny; that the Sepoys, as a body, knew nothing of the plans arranged; and that the only compact entered into by regiments, as a body, was, that their particular regiments would do as the other regiments did. The committee conducted the correspondence and arranged the plan of operations, viz., that on the 31st of May parties should be told off to murder all European functionaries, most of whom would be engaged at church; seize the treasure, which would then be augmented by the first instalment of the rubbie harvest; and release the prisoners, of which an army existed in the North-Western Provinces alone of upwards of twenty-five thousand men. The regiments in Delhi and its immediate vicinity were instructed to seize the magazine and fortifications. . . . From this combined, and simultaneous massacre on the 31st of May, 1857, we were, humanly speaking, saved by Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth commanding the Third Regiment of Bengal Light Cavalry, and the frail ones of the Bazaar.* . . . The mine had been prepared and the train had been laid, but it was not intended to light the slow match for another three weeks. The spark, which fell from female lips, ignited it at once, and the night of the 10th of May, 1857, saw the com-

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* *Ante*, Chapter II.

1857. May. mencement of a tragedy never before witnessed since India passed under British sway."*

This is strong testimony, and from a strong man—one not prone to violent assumptions or strange conjectures, who had unusual opportunities of investigating the truth, and much discernment and discrimination to turn those opportunities to account. But the proofs of this general combination for a simultaneous rising of the Native troops are not so numerous or so convincing as to warrant the acceptance of the story as a demonstrated fact. It is certain, however, that if this sudden rising in all parts of the country had found the English unprepared, but few of our people would have escaped the swift destruction. It would then have been the hard task of the British nation to reconquer India, or else to suffer our Eastern Empire to pass into an ignominious tradition. But whether designed or not designed by man, God's mercy forbade its accomplishment; and in a few hours after this first great explosion, the Electric Telegraph was carrying the evil tidings to all parts of the country. The note of warning was sounded across the whole length and breadth of the land; and wherever an Englishman was stationed there was the stern preparation of defence.

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* Mr. J. C. Wilson's Moradabad Narrative (Official), Dec. 24, 1858.

CHAPTER IV.

EFFORTS OF LORD CANNING—STATE OF PUBLIC FEELING IN CALCUTTA—APPREHENSIONS AND ALARMS—BEARING OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—THE FIRST MOVEMENT TOWARDS DELHI—DEATH OF GENERAL ANSON—FIRST ARRIVAL OF SUCCOURS—APPEARANCE OF COLONEL NEILL.

1857. May.

WHILST little by little the details recited in the preceding chapter were making themselves known to Lord Canning in Calcutta, the Governor-General, calmly confronting the dangers and difficulties before him, was straining every nerve to repair the first great disaster, and to protect those defenceless tracts of country in which new rebellions were most likely to assert themselves. "The part of the country," he wrote to the President of the India Board, "which gives me most anxiety is the line which stretches through the length of Bengal from Barrackpore close by to Agra in the North-Western Provinces. In that length of seven hundred and fifty miles, there is one European Regiment at Dinapore, and that is all. Benares has a Sikh Regiment, but no Europeans; Allahabad the same; not reckoning a hundred European invalids, who were sent there a few days ago. At one of these places the Native Regiment is a suspected one, and at either the temptation to seize the Fort or the Trea-

1857. May.

sury will be very great, if they hear that Delhi continues in the hands of mutinous regiments. Therefore, the two points to which I am straining are the hastening of the expulsion of the rebels from Delhi, and the collection of the Europeans here to be pushed up the country." What he did, in the early part of May, for the gathering of troops from a distance, has been told in the first volume of this History. The results of those initial efforts rapidly developed themselves; but what seems to be swift despatch, in tranquil times, is weary waiting, when the issues of life or death may depend upon the loss or gain of an hour.

Calcutta in the month of May.

Meanwhile, in the great vice-regal capital of India there was much tribulation. For there were gathered together large numbers of Christian people, men, women, and children. But numbers did not seem to impart to them either strength or courage. A vast majority of those Christian inhabitants were men who had been habituated, through long years, to peace and security. There was not in the whole world, perhaps, a more tranquil, self-possessed City, than Calcutta had ever been during a period of nearly a century. Even the local tumults, to which all great towns are more or less periodically subject, had been absent from the "City of Palaces." The worst disturbances had resulted from the excitability of stray sailors from the merchant-ships overmuch refreshed in the punch-houses of the Dhurrumtollah or the Chitpore Bazaar. And the natives of the country generally had been regarded as a harmless, servile, obsequious race of men, to be reviled, perhaps beaten at discretion, by the haughty and

1857. May. The non-official Englishman.

intolerant Englishman. That Englishman, as seen in Calcutta, was, for the most part, of the non-official type; experienced in the ways of commerce, active, enterprising, intelligent, but with little knowledge of the Native character save in its trading aspects, and little given to concern himself about intricate questions of Indian policy. The name of "Ditcher" had been given to him, as one who seldom or never passed beyond the boundary of the Mahratta ditch. The railway had done something to diminish this inclusiveness; but still many of the European residents of Calcutta knew little of the great world beyond, and were prone, therefore, to attach undue importance to the busy commercial capital in which they were buying and selling, and were holding their household gods. Their idea of India much resembled the Chinese map-maker's idea of the world. The City of Palaces, like the Celestial Empire, covered in their minds, nearly the whole of the sheet.

It was not strange that men of this class, unaccustomed to great excitements, little used to strenuous action of any kind, and in many instances, perhaps, wholly unskilled in the use of offensive weapons, should have been stunned and bewildered by the tidings from the North-West, and what seemed to them the probabilities of a recurrence of similar tragedies in Bengal. Nor was it strange that they should have looked eagerly to the Government to put forth all its available resources to protect them against the dangers which their excited imaginations beheld rapidly approaching. The very confidence which they had before felt in their security, and their general contempt for the subject races, now rendered the reaction which had set in all the more exaggerated and overwhelming. The panic in May has, perhaps, been

1857. May. overstated in the recital. But stories are still current of Christian families betaking themselves for safety to the ships in the river, or securing themselves within the ramparts of the Fort, and of men staining their manhood by hiding themselves in dark places. But these manifestations of unmanly fear were principally among the Eurasians and Portuguese, or what are described as the "lower order of European shopkeepers." That some people left their homes in the suburbs, that some took their passages to England, that many bought guns and revolvers, and lay down to rest full-dressed and full-armed, is not to be questioned.* And it is certain that the prevailing feeling was that the Governor-General failed to appreciate the magnitude of the danger—that nothing could rouse him from the lethargy indicated by his still face of marble and his tranquil demeanour—and that, in a word, he was not equal to the occasion.

It would be unjust to say that the apprehensions of the Calcutta community were altogether unreasoning and unreasonable, for there were many sources of alarm at this time. Foremost of all there was the great dread of the Sepoys, who, a little while before trusted guardians of our lives and properties, had suddenly grown into murderers and despoilers. There was but little space between Barrackpore and Calcutta. A night's march might have brought the

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* I wish it to be borne in mind that this refers entirely to the state of things in May. A far more unmistakable panic, of which some account will hereafter be given, arose in the middle of June. But even of the former month a cotemporary journalist wrote: "Men went about with revolvers in their carriages, and trained their bearers to load quickly and fire low. The ships and steamers in the rivers have been crowded with families seeking refuge from the attack, which was nightly expected, and everywhere a sense of insecurity prevailed, which was natural enough when the character of the danger apprehended is taken into consideration."—*Friend of India, May* 28.

1857. May.

whole brigade into the capital, to overpower the European guards, to seize the Fort, and to massacre the Christian inhabitants. Then there was in the immediate suburbs of Calcutta, along the river-bank, the great, reeking, overflowing sewer of the Oude household—the exiled King, his astute Prime Minister, and his multitude of dependants, all restless in intrigue, and eager to inflict measureless retribution upon the nation that had degraded and despoiled them. And then again there was a vague fear, dominant over all, that the vast and varied populations of the Native suburbs and bazaars would rise against the white people, release the prisoners in the gaols, and gorge themselves with the plunder of the great commercial capital of India. All these were at least possibilities. What had been done at Meerut and Delhi might be acted over again at Calcutta on a larger scale and with more terrible effect.

Bearing of Lord Canning

After a lapse of years we may speak lightly of these dangers, and say that Lord Canning discerned the true state of things, whilst others saw them darkly through the glass of their fears. But the difference, perhaps, was rather that of outward bearing than of inward appreciation of the position of affairs. It is hard to say how much depends, in such a crisis, upon the calm and confident demeanour of the head of the Government. Day after day passed, and the Governor-General sat there, firm as a rock, waiting for fresh tidings of disaster, and doing all that human agency could do to succour our distressed people and to tread down the insolence of the enemy. The great English community of Calcutta thought that he did not see the magnitude of the danger, because he did not tremble for the fate of the capital. He did not know what it was to tremble,

1857. May. and some said that he did not know what it was to feel. But though he wore a calm face, in no man's mind was there a clearer sense of the magnitude of the crisis,* and in no man's heart was there a deeper pity. He pitied those at a distance, who were really girt about with peril, and whose despairing cries for help, in the shape of English troops, nearly broke his heart. But he pitied most of all, with a contemptuous pity, those who exaggerated the dangers around them, who could not conceal their fears, and who would fain have induced him to treat Calcutta as though it were the whole Indian Empire. If there were any impassiveness, any obduracy in him, it was simply that he could not bring himself to think much about the place in which he was living, whilst there were other places begirt with more imminent peril. He forgot himself, with the self-negation of a noble nature, and, forgetting himself, he may for a while have forgotten those immediately around him. And so it happened that the fears of many Englishmen in Calcutta were mixed with strong resentments, and they began to hate the Governor-General who could not bring himself to think that the Indian Empire was included within the circuit of the Marhatta ditch.

As the month of May advanced, the panic increased. It has been shown, in measured terms, what the Go-

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* Lord Canning's correspondence abounds with proofs of this. Take the following from a characteristic letter to Bishop Wilson, which clearly shows that he did not under-rate the danger, although he was confident of the national ability to surmount it: "The sky is very black, and as yet the signs of a clearing are faint. But reason and common sense are on our side from the very beginning. The course of the Government has been guided by justice and temper. I do not know that any one measure of precaution and strength, which human foresight can indicate, has been neglected. There are stout hearts and clear heads at the chief posts of danger—Agra, Lucknow, and Benares. For the rest, the issue is in higher hands than ours. I am very confident of complete success."

1857. May. Volunteer offers.

vernor-General thought of these manifestations of a great terror.* In later letters he spoke out in more emphatic language, and cotemporary records of a less exalted character seem to support his assertions. Perhaps his eagerness to encourage others, by showing that he had no fear for the Presidency, carried him into an excess of outward indifference. Certainly, he did not seem to appreciate, in the first instance, an offer made by the British inhabitants to enrol themselves into a volunteer corps for the protection of the great City of Palaces. Many public bodies came forward at this time with protestations of unswerving loyalty and free offers of service. The Trades Association, the Masonic Lodges, the Native Christian Community, and side by side with our own compatriots and fellow-subjects, the representatives of the great French and American nations, sympathising with us in our distress. Such offers were worthy and honourable, and entitled to all gratitude from our rulers. Those communities desired to be armed and disciplined and organised after the manner of soldiers. Lord Canning told them in reply that they might enrol themselves as special constables. And it was thought that there was a touch of contempt in the very nature of the answer.

But, although Lord Canning believed that there was a "groundless panic," he had no design to reject contemptuously those offers of assistance. His desire was to display no outward symptom of alarm or mistrust. He was supreme ruler, not of a class or of a community, but of all classes and communities. He saw clearly that the great fear had possessed every quarter of the city and its suburbs, and was agitating

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* *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 610, 611.

1857. May. the breasts of all the varied populations inhabiting them, and he knew that what might tranquillise and subdue in one direction might alarm and irritate in another. At no period of our history were the Natives of India in so great a paroxysm of fear. They shuddered to think that they might lose their caste—shuddered to think that they might lose their lives. All sorts of strange reports were afloat among the people, and the English were eager that Lord Canning should contradict them by public proclamation. "One of the last reports rife in the Bazaar," he wrote on the 20th of May, "is, that I have ordered beef to be thrown into the tanks, to pollute the caste of all Hindoos who bathe there, and that on the Queen's birthday all the grain-shops are to be closed, in order to drive the people to eat unclean food. Men, who ought to have heads on their shoulders, are gravely asking that each fable should be contradicted by proclamation as it arises, and are arming themselves with revolvers because this is not done. I have already taken the only step that I consider advisable, in the sense of a refutation of these and like rumours, and patience, firmness, and I hope a speedy return of the deluded to common sense, will do the rest." And clearly recognising all these conflicting fears and suspicions, he walked steadily but warily between them, assailed on all sides by cries for special help, but knowing well that the safety of all depended upon the strength and constancy of his resistance.

Celebration of the Queen's Birthday. May 25. The Queen's birthday was celebrated in Calcutta after the wonted fashion. A grand ball was given at Government House.* It was the desire of Lord Canning, above all things, that nothing should be done to betray any want of confidence in the general loyalty of the people. He had been besought to exchange his own personal guard of Natives for one composed of Europeans, but this he had refused to do. And the sweet face of Lady Canning was to be seen, evening after evening, calm and smiling, as she took her wonted drive on the Course or in the open suburbs of Calcutta. And now that it was represented that it might be expedient to omit the usual feu-de-joie fired in the Queen's honour, the suggestion was rejected; but in order that there might be no misapprehension as to the ammunition used on the occasion, a guard of Sepoys was sent to bring some of the old unsuspected cartridges out of the regimental stores at Barrackpore. The ball in the evening was well attended; but some absented themselves, believing that the congregation under one roof of all the leading members of the English community would suggest a fitting occasion for an attack on Government House.* There was not, indeed, a ruffle even upon the surface; although the day was likely to be one of more than usual excitement, for it was the great Mahomedan festival of the Eed, and it was thought in many places besides Calcutta that a Mussulman rising might be anticipated. After this there was some little return of confidence. But any accidental circumstance, such as the explosion of a few festal fireworks, was sufficient to throw many into a paroxysm of alarm.† 1857. May.

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* The 24th of May fell on Sunday. The celebration was, therefore, on the 25th.

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* "Two young ladies refused to go at the last moment, and sat up with a small bag prepared for flight, till their father returned from the ball and reassured them." . . . . . . "Miss —— has hired two sailors to sit up in her house of a night; but they got tipsy, and frightened her more than imaginary enemies."—*Journal of a Lady, MS.*

† "A few nights ago woke up at two o'clock by what sounded like guns firing. Many thought the Alipore jail had been broken open. Many gentlemen armed themselves, and got carriages ready for the ladies to fly to the Fort. On going into the verandah I was thankful to see a great display of fireworks going up, which was the cause of all the noise. It was the marriage of one of the Mysore princes."—*Ibid.*

1857. May. The first movement on Delhi.

All this time, Lord Canning, aided by those immediately around him, was doing all that could be done for the successful attainment of the great ends to which he had addressed himself from the commencement—the recovery of Delhi and the protection of the Gangetic provinces. But it was not easy in the existing dearth of troops to accomplish both of these objects with the desired despatch; and it is not strange, therefore, that some difference of opinion prevailed among the advisers of Lord Canning as to the policy which, in these straitened circumstances, it was more expedient to adopt. It is believed that the Civil members of the Supreme Council, seeing how large a portion of our available military strength would be locked up under the walls of Delhi, and how, in the meanwhile, large breadths of country would be exposed to the fury of the enemy, advised that the attack on the great city of the Mogul should be delayed for a while, in order to employ the European troops in Upper India upon the general defence of the country. Sir John Low was of a different opinion; and he drew up a minute on the subject, full of sound arguments in favour of an immediate effort to recover the lost position. But the Governor-General had already come to that conclusion. Indeed, he had never doubted, for a day, that let what might happen elsewhere, it was his first duty to wrest the imperial city from the hands of the Insurgents. He saw plainly that the fall of Delhi had imparted a political, a national significance to a movement, which otherwise might have been regarded as little more than a local outbreak. It had, indeed, converted for a while a mutiny into a revolution; and the Governor-General felt, therefore, that to strike at Delhi, was to strike at the very heart of the danger—that to deliver a deadly blow at that point would be to cause an immediate collapse of the vital powers of rebellion from one end of the country to the other.

So he at once issued his orders for the striking of that blow; and day after day the telegraph wires carried to the Commander-in-Chief briefly emphatic orders to make short work of Delhi. Though the Lower Provinces were all but bare of European troops there was some wealth of English regiments upon the slopes of the Northern Hills, where the Head-Quarters of the Army were then planted; and Lord Canning, with something of the impetuosity of the civilian, which is prone to overlook military difficulties, believed that those regiments might be gathered up at once and poured down with resistless force upon Delhi. Severed by nearly a thousand miles from the point of attack, he felt that he himself could do but little. But he had faith in the Commander-in-Chief—faith in the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces—faith in the great Commissioner of the Punjab; and in the first letter which he wrote to England, after the outbreak at Meerut, he said: "As to expediting the crushing of the Delhi rebels, I work at some disadvantage at a distance of nine hundred miles; but the forces are converging upon the point as rapidly as the season will admit, and I am confident that with Colvin's aid and example, every man will be inspirited to do his utmost. I have made the Commander-in-Chief aware of the vast importance to the Lower Provinces that an end should be made of the work quickly. Time is everything. Delhi once crushed, and a terrible example made, we shall have no more difficulties." To what extent the realised facts fulfilled his sanguine anticipations, will presently be made apparent.

Meanwhile, the Governor-General was anxiously

1857. May. Movement of troops from below.

turning to good account the first-fruits of his initial measures for the collection of European troops, and trying to succour those defenceless posts at which the enemy were most likely to strike. The difficulties and perplexities which beset him were great. He had only two European regiments in the neighbourhood of the capital—the Fifty-third Foot, whose Head-Quarters were in Fort William, and the Eighty-fourth, who had been brought round from Rangoon in March, and who had since been stationed at Chinsurah, on the banks of the Hooghly, above Barrackpore. He would fain have sent upwards a part of the little strength thus gathered at the Presidency; but those two regiments were all that belonged to him for the defence of Lower Bengal. There was not another English regiment nearer than Dinapore, four hundred miles distant from Calcutta. And there, in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, were many points which it was of extreme importance to defend. There was Fort William, with its great Arsenal; there was the Gun-manufactory at Cossipore, a few miles higher up the river; there was the Powder-manufactory at Ishapore, some twelve miles beyond, and there was the Artillery School of Instruction at Dum-Dum, with all its varied appliances for the manufacture of ordnance stores. A little way beyond Chowringhee, the fashionable suburb of the City of Palaces, lay the great gaol of Alipore, crowded with malefactors, many of the worst class; and hard by were the Government clothing godowns, or stores, from which the uniforms and accoutrements of the army were drawn. Then in different parts of the city were the Calcutta Mint and the Treasury and the Banks, all groaning with coin—so that there was nothing wanting that could have supplied an

1857. May.

insurgent army with all the munitions and equipments of war, and enabled them to take the field against us with the unfailing cement of high pay to keep them together.

Conduct of Government considered.

Wise after the event, public writers have said that if Lord Canning, in the third week of the month of May, had accepted the first offer of the European inhabitants to enroll themselves into a volunteer corps—that if he had disbanded the Sepoy Regiments at Barrackpore, and ordered the disbandment of those at Dinapore — events which were subsequently rendered necessary—a large portion of the European force in Bengal might have been set free and pushed up by rail and road to the points which were most beset with danger, and that great disasters which subsequently befel us might thus have been averted.* There are, doubtless, many things which, in that month of May, would have been done differently, and might have been done better, if the future had been clearly revealed to those who had the conduct of affairs. But we must judge men according

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* The two ablest of the early writers, the author of the "Red Pamphlet," and Mr. Meade, in his "Sepoy Revolt," dwell very emphatically on this point. The former says: "An enrolment on a large scale at this time would have enabled the Governor-General to dispense with the services of one European regiment at least; but so bent was he on ignoring the danger, that he not only declined the offers of the Trades' Association, the Masonic Fraternity, the Native converts, the Americans, and the French inhabitants and others, but he declined them in terms calculated to deaden rather than to excite a feeling of loyalty." Mr. Meade says: "A thousand English volunteer infantry, four hundred cavalry, and fifteen hundred sailors were at the disposal of the Government a week after the revolt became known. . . . Whilst the volunteers were learning how to load and fire, and the merchant seamen were being instructed in the use of artillery, Government might have placed from the terminus (at Raneegunge) to Cawnpore a line of stations for horses and bullocks, guarded, if necessary, by posts of armed men. . . . . . Had Government only consented to do just a fortnight beforehand what they were coerced to do on the 14th of June, they might have had on the first day of that month a force of two thousand Europeans at Raneegunge, fully equipped with guns and stores."

1857. May. to the light of the day which shone upon them, not the light of the morrow, which had not yet broken when they were called upon to act. Illumined by this morrow's light, we now know that it might have been better if the Barrackpore and Dinapore regiments had been disarmed in the middle of May; but the former were then protesting their loyalty, and offering to fight against the rebels, and the latter were still believed in by General Lloyd, who commanded the Division.* The temper of the troops, in all parts of the country, seemed at that time to depend upon the fate of Delhi, and more experienced Indian statesmen than Lord Canning believed that Delhi would soon be crushed. And, whilst it was deemed expedient to keep the Bengal Native Army together so long as any hope survived, it was, at that time, in Bengal, held to be impossible to disarm all the Native regiments. Disarming, said Lord Canning, is "a very effective measure, where practicable, but in Bengal, where we have, spread over from Barrackpore to Cawnpore, fifteen Native regiments to one European, simply impossible. A very different game has to be played here."†

Moreover, in the neighbourhood both of Calcutta and of Dinapore, there were other dangers than those arising from the armed Sepoy regiments. In the latter there was the excited Mahomedan population of Patna, of which I shall speak hereafter; and in the former there were the many local perils, of which I have already spoken. And it was at least doubtful whether an undisciplined body of sailors and civilians, even with a few staff-officers to keep them together, would have supplied the place of a regular regiment of Europeans. Lord Canning, knowing well the constitution of the European community of Calcutta did not think, from the very nature of their interests and their occupations, that they could form a defensive body on which any reliance could be placed. Where the treasure of men is there will their hearts be also; and, in many instances, if possible, their hands. It was hardly to be expected that, if there had been any sudden alarm—if the signal had been sounded, and every man's services needed in a critical emergency, many would not have thought rather of their wives and children than of the public safety, and some, perhaps, more of their own material property than of that of the State.* Doubtless there were brave and patriotic spirits among them who would have gone gladly to the front; but Lord Canning, perhaps, did not err in thinking that the majority of members of the non-military community were too much encumbered by their worldly affairs to make efficient soldiers, either for the performance of ordinary duties or the confronting of imminent peril. That they could have formed a substitute for regular soldiers was improbable, though they would have been a serviceable supplement to them.

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* As late as the 2nd of June, General Lloyd wrote to Lord Canning, saying, "Although no one can now feel full confidence in the loyalty of Native troops generally, yet I believe that the regiments here will remain quiet, unless some great temptation or excitement should assail them, in which case I fear they could not be relied upon. The thing required to keep them steady is a blow quickly struck at Delhi."—*MS. Correspondence.*

† Lord Canning to Mr. Vernon Smith, June 5, 1857.—*MS. Correspondence.*

If, then, the volunteers had been enrolled when the first offer of service was made to Lord Canning,

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* It is very vividly in my recollection that, on the famous 10th of April, 1848, when there was a vague expectation that London would be sacked by the Chartists, and immense numbers of special constables had been sworn in, I asked one of the most experienced men in the district in which I lived how many of those sworn in would turn out on the given signal (it was to be the ringing of the church bell), and I was told "not ten per cent."

1857. May. he could not have done more than he did to send succours up the country. Nor did it, at the time, seem to him that the danger was so imminent on the Gangetic provinces as to demand that Bengal should be stripped, even for a few weeks, of her only reliable defences. It was just during that particular interval between the receipt of intelligence of the Meerut outbreak and the arrival of the first reinforcements from beyond the seas, that the accounts from the upper country were least alarming. There was, apparently, a suspension of rebellious activity. The telegraphic messages received from the principal stations were all of an assuring character. On the 19th and 20th the report from Benares was, "All perfectly quiet," "troops steady." On the 19th Sir Henry Lawrence telegraphed from Lucknow, "All very well in city, cantonments, and country." Sir Hugh Wheeler, at Cawnpore, on the same day, sent a kindred message, "All quiet here, the excitement somewhat less." From Allahabad, on the same day, the tidings were, "Troops quiet and well behaved;" and the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces at Agra assured the Governor-General that "Things were looking cheerful." "There may," it was added, "be some delay in the actual advance on Delhi. It is generally felt, however, that it must soon fall, and the flame has not spread." The following days brought intelligence of the same satisfactory complexion, the only evil tidings being those which spoke of mutiny at Alighur, and that was quickly followed by the announcement from Agra that a strong expedition had been organised for the recapture of the place.

There was little, therefore, that Lord Canning could do in the earlier weeks of May to succour the

1857. May.

North-Western Provinces, and judged by the light of the day no pressing necessity to incur, for that purpose, great risks in the neighbourhood of the capital. What little he could do with safety he did. He ordered up a detachment of the Eighty-fourth to Benares, and he suggested to General Lloyd, at Dinapore, that he might, perhaps, send a company or two of the Tenth to the same point. These first movements might save a few lives, and might give a general impression of action on our part, the importance of which was great at such a time. But it was to the reinforcements coming from beyond the seas that he eagerly looked for substantive aid. He had written on the 19th to the Indian Minister in England, saying: "Towards this object the steps taken are as follows—The Madras Fusiliers are on their way, and will be here on the 21st or 22nd. A regiment has been sent for from Rangoon, and will arrive in the course of next week. Two regiments at least with some Artillery (perhaps three regiments), will come round from Bombay as soon as they arrive from Persia. They are all on their way. Another regiment from Kurrachee is ordered up the Indus to Ferozpore, as a stand-by, if John Lawrence should want help. An officer goes to-day to Ceylon to procure from Sir Henry Ward every soldier he can spare. I have asked for at least five hundred Europeans, but will accept Malays in place of or besides them. The same officer carries letters to Elgin and Ashburnham, begging that the regiments destined for China may be turned first to India. . . . . This is all that I can do at present to collect European strength, except the withdrawal of one more regiment from Pegu, which, when a steamer is available, will take place." And now,

1857. May.

before the end of the month, he learnt that the Madras Fusiliers were in the river. Such was his confidence, that when succours began to arrive, he felt, however small they might be in proportion to his needs, that the tide was beginning to turn in his favour. After a fortnight of enforced inaction, there was something invigorating in the thought that he was now beginning to hold palpably in his hands the means of rendering substantial aid to his defenceless countrymen. And he knew, moreover, that the moral effect of the arrival of a single European regiment would be greater than the material assistance, for it would soon be noised abroad that the English were coming from beyond the seas to avenge their slaughtered brethren, and Rumour would be sure to magnify the extent of the arrival.*

Colonel Neill and the Madras Fusiliers.

Still, in itself the gain was very great; for the vessels which were working up the Hooghly were bringing not only a well-seasoned, well-disciplined regiment, in fine fighting order, but a chief who had within him all the elements of a great soldier. The Second Madras European Regiment was commanded by Colonel James George Neill. It was one of those few English regiments which, enlisted for the service of the East India Company, and maintained exclusively on the Indian establishment, bore on their banners the memorials of a series of victories from

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* I am aware that a contrary statement has been made. It has been asserted that the Government took pains rather to conceal than to make known the arrival of reinforcements at Calcutta. Especially by disguising the names of the vessels in which the troops were coming up the river. If the *Alethea*, for example, were coming up, she was telegraphed, it was said, as the *Sarah Sands*. Assuming the fact to be as stated, we may readily understand the object of the concealment. It might have been sound policy not to make known the coming of the troops until they were landed and fit for service. If there had been any combination for a rising, the moment seized would probably have been when it was known that our reinforcements were at the Sandheads. But I am assured, on the highest authority, that the story is not true.

1857. May.

the earliest days of our conquests in India. It had just returned from the Persian Gulf, when Neill, fresh from Crimean service,* found to his delight that he was to be appointed to command the regiment, with which he had served during the greater part of his adult life. He had gone down to see the regiment disembark, and he had written in his journal that they were "a very fine healthy body of men, fully equal to any regiment he had ever seen." This was on the 20th of April, and he little then knew how soon he would be called upon to test their efficiency in the field. Three or four weeks afterwards, news came that Upper India was in a blaze, and the tidings were quickly followed by a summons for the regiment to take ship for Bengal. Then Neill rejoiced exceedingly to think of the lessons he had learnt in the Crimea, and the experience he had gained there; and he felt, to use his own words, "fully equal to any extent of professional employment or responsibility which could ever devolve upon him."

Born in the month of May, 1810, at a short distance from the chief town of Ayrshire, in Scotland, James Neill had entered the Indian service in his seventeenth year, and was, therefore, when summoned to take active part in the Sepoy War, a man of forty-seven years of age, and a soldier of thirty years' standing. Of a strong physical constitution, of active athletic habits, he shrunk from no work, and he was overcome by no fatigue. There were few men in the whole range of the Indian Army better qualified by nature and by training to engage in the stirring events of such a campaign as was

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* He had been Second-in-Command, under Sir Robert Vivian, of the Anglo-Turkish Contingent.

1857. May. opening out before him. He was a God-fearing Scotchman, with something in him of the old Covenanter type. He was gentle and tender as a woman, in his domestic relations, chivalrous and self-denying in all the actions of his life, and so careful, as a commander, of all under his charge, that he would have yielded his tent or given up his meals to any one more needing them than himself. But towards the enemies of our nation and the persecutors of our race he was as hard and as fiery as flint; and he was not one to be tolerant of the shortcomings of our own people, wanting in courage or capacity, or in any way failing in their manliness. He knew, when he embarked for Bengal, that there was stern work before him; and he brooded over the future so intently, that the earnestness and resolution within him spoke out ever from his countenance, and it was plain to those around him, that once in front of the enemy, he would smite them with an unsparing hand, and never cease from his work, until he should witness its full completion or be arrested by the stroke of death.

May 23. On the 23rd of May, Colonel Neill was off Calcutta with the leading wing of his regiment, and soon the whole corps had disembarked. But it was easier to bring troops into port along the great highway of the ocean, than to despatch them with the required rapidity into the interior of the country. Every possible provision, however, had been made and was still being made to push forward the reinforcements by river and by road. Every available horse and bullock along the line had been purchased by Government; every carriage and cart secured for the conveyance of the troops up the country.* The river

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* "A steady stream of reinforcements is now being poured into Benares. Every horse and bullock that can be bought on the road in engaged,

1857. May.

steamers were carrying their precious freights of humanity, but too slowly for our needs, in that dry season, and the railway was to be brought into requisition to transport others to the scene of action. It was by the latter route that the bulk of Neill's regiment, in all nine hundred strong, were to be despatched towards Benares.* It might have been supposed that, at such a time, every Christian man in Calcutta would have put forth all his strength to perfect and to expedite the appointed work, eager to contribute by all means within his power to the rescue of imperilled Christendom. Especially was it to be looked for that all holding such authority as might enable them to accelerate the despatch of troops to our threatened, perhaps beleagured posts, would strain every nerve to accomplish effectually this good work. But on the platform of the Calcutta terminus, on the river side, opposite to Howrah, all such natural zeal as this seemed to be basely wanting. There was no alacrity in helping the troops to start on their holy duty; and soon apathy and inaction grew into open opposition. When the second party of a hundred men was to be despatched, stress of weather delayed their arrival, from the flats in the river, at the platform or landing-stage, near which the train was waiting for them, under the orders of the Supreme

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and the dawk establishments have been increased to the utmost. The men who go by horse-dawk reach Benares in five days; those by bullock in ten. The former conveyance can take only from eighteen to twenty-four a day; the latter a hundred. Some are gone up by steamers. These will be sixteen days on the journey."—*Lord Canning to Sir H. Wheeler, May 26. MS.*

* "I landed and saw the Military Secretary and the Deputy Quartermaster-General, and made all arrangement to start off the men I had brought up by steamers to Benares. However, next day there was a change. Only a hundred and thirty men went up the country by steamer, and the rest I am starting off by the train."—*Private Letter of Col. Neill.* The rail then only went as far as Raneegunge.

1857. May.

Government. But as the Fusiliers came alongside and were landing, in the darkness of the early night, without an effort of help from the railway people, the station-master cried out that they were late, and that the train would not wait for them a moment. Against this Neill remonstrated, but the official, growing more peremptory in his tone and insolent in his manner, threatened at once to start the train. Other functionaries then came forward and addressed him in the same threatening strain. [illegible] Colonel might command his regiment, but that he did not command the railway, and that the train should be despatched without him. On this, Neill telling them that they were traitors and rebels, and that it was fortunate for them that he had not to deal with them, placed a guard over the engineer and stoker, and told them to stir at their peril. A few weeks later, in parts of the country more distant from the central authority, such traitors as these would, perhaps, have been hanged.

The train started, some ten minutes after its appointed time, with its precious burden of Fusiliers; and the tidings of what Neill had done soon reached Lord Canning. It was not in the brave heart of the Governor-General to refuse its meed of admiration to such an act. Even official Calcutta, though a little startled in its proprieties, commended, after a time, the Madras Colonel, whilst at all the stations above, when the story was known, people said that the right man was on his way to help them, and looked eagerly for the coming succours.

Legislative enactments.

And never, in a season of trouble, was there a more timely arrival; for the lull of which I have

1857. May.

spoken now seemed to be at an end. As the month of May burnt itself out, the tidings which came from the country above were more distressing and more alarming. It was plain that the North-West Provinces, from one end to the other, were fast blazing into rebellion—plain that we were destined to see worse things than any we had yet witnessed—and that the whole strength of the British nation must be put forth [redacted]rapple with the gigantic danger. If any hope before, that the rebellion or be paralysed by the infliction of swift retribution on Delhi, it had now ceased to animate the breasts of Lord Canning and his colleagues. They now saw that it was necessary to the salvation of the English power in India, not only that our people should be everywhere let loose upon the enemy, but that they should be armed with exceptional powers suited to, and justified by, the crisis. A reign of lawlessness had commenced; but for a while the avenging hand of the English Government had been restrained by the trammels of the written law. It was time now to cease from the unequal conflict. The English were few; their enemies were many. The many had appealed to the law of brute force; and the few were justified in accepting the challenge. The time for the observance of municipal formalities—of niceties of criminal procedure—of precise balancings of evidence and detailed fulness of record—had clearly now passed away. A terrible necessity had forced itself upon the rulers of the land. In the great death-struggle which had come upon us, the written law had been violated upon the one side, and it was now to be suspended upon the other. The savage had arisen against us, and it had become our work to fight the savage with his own

1857. May.

weapons. So the law-makers stood up and shook themselves loose from the trammels of the law. On the 30th of May, the Legislative Council passed an act which swept away the old time-honoured seats of justice, wheresoever Rebellion was disporting itself, and placed the power of life and death in the hands of the executive officer, whatsoever his rank, his age, or his wisdom. The Act, after declaring that all persons owing allegiance to the British Government, who should rebel or wage war, or attempt to do so, against the Queen or Government of the East Indies, or instigate or abet such persons, should be liable to the punishment of death, transportation, or imprisonment, gave the Executive Government of any Presidency or Place power to proclaim any district as in a state of rebellion, and to issue a Commission forthwith for the trial of all persons charged with offences against the State, or murder, arson, robbery, or other heinous crime against person or property—the Commissioner or Commissioners so appointed were empowered to hold a Court in any part of the said district, and without the attendance or *futwah* of a law officer, or the assistance of assessors, to pass upon every person convicted before the Court of any of the above-mentioned crimes the punishment of death, or transportation, or imprisonment; "and the judgment of such Court," it was added, "shall be final and conclusive, and the said Court shall not be subordinate to the Sudder Court."* This gave immense power to individual Englishmen. But it armed only the civil authorities; so an order was passed by the Governor-General in Council authorising the senior military officer, of whatsoever rank, at any military station in the Bengal Presidency, to appoint General Courts-Martial, either European or Native, or mixed, of not less than five members, and "to confirm and carry into effect, immediately or otherwise, any sentence of such Court-Martial."

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* The Act, which received the assent of the Governor-General, and thus passed into law on the 8th of June, is given entire in the appendix.

1857. May.

June.

More reinforcements.

With the new month came in further reinforcements from beyond the seas, and something like confidence was re-established in the Christian communities of Calcutta; for although rebellion was spreading itself all over Upper India, the continual stream of English troops that was beginning to pour into the capital seemed to give security to its inmates. The regiments released from service in the Persian Gulf, were now making their appearance on the banks of the Hooghly. The Sixty-fourth arrived on the 3rd of June, and soon afterwards the Thirty-fifth came in from Moulmein. And then the kilted Highlanders of the Seventy-eighth, also from Persia, were seen ascending the ghauts of Calcutta, with their red beards and their bare knees—an unaccustomed sight to the natives of Bengal, in whose eyes they appeared to be half women and half beasts. Others followed, and every effort was made to expedite their despatch to the upper country. At Raneegunge, to which point the railway ran from the neighbourhood of Calcutta, an experienced officer was making arrangements to send on detachments by horse-dawk and bullock-dawk to Benares; but the resources of the State were miserably inadequate to the necessities of the crisis, and prompt movement by land, therefore, on a large scale was wholly impossible. The journey to Benares could be accomplished in five days; but

1857. June. it was officially reported to Lord Canning that only from eighteen to twenty-four men a day could thus be forwarded by horsed carriages. By the 4th of June, it was computed that, by these means of conveyance, ninety men with their officers would have reached Benares; by the 8th, eighty-eight more; and by the 12th, another batch of eighty-eight. The bullock-carriages, which afforded slower means of progression, but which could carry larger numbers, might, it was calculated, convey the troops onward at the rate of a hundred men a day.* So, on the 10th of June, Lord Canning was able to write to Mr. Colvin, saying, "The Europeans are still sent up steadily at the rate of a hundred and twenty men a day, and henceforward they will not be stopped either at Benares or Allahabad, but be passed on to Cawnpore. My object is to place at Sir Hugh Wheeler's disposal a force with which he can leave his entrenchments at Cawnpore, and show himself at Lucknow or elsewhere. He will best know where when the time arrives. To this end, I call upon you to give your aid by furthering by every means in your power the despatch southwards of a portion of the European force which has marched upon Delhi." It had not yet dawned upon the Government that Delhi was not to be "made short work of" by the force that had come down from the North to attack it. And there were many others of large experience all over the country who believed that there was no power of resistance in the place to withstand the first assaults even of such an English army as Anson was gathering up and equipping for service. What that force was, and what its efforts, I have now to relate.

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* Mr. Cecil Beadon to Lord Canning, May 26.—*MS. Correspondence.*

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL ANSON AT UMBALLAH—FIRST MOVEMENT OF TROOPS—THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS—DIFFICULTY OF MOVEMENT—THE PANIC ON THE HILLS—THE SIEGE-TRAIN—REMONSTRANCES AGAINST DELAY—VIEWS OF LORD CANNING AND SIR JOHN LAWRENCE—GOOD WORK OF THE CIVILIANS—CONDUCT OF THE SIKH CHIEFS—THE MARCH TO KURNAUL—DEATH OF GENERAL ANSON—SUCCESSION OF SIR HENRY BARNARD.

May 12.

At Head Quarters.

DISQUIETED by reports of the uneasy nervous state of the Regiments at Head-Quarters, but little apprehending the approach of any gigantic danger, General Anson was recreating himself on the heights of Simlah, when, on the 12th of May, young Barnard rode in from Umballah bearing a letter from his father. It informed the Commander-in-Chief that a strange incoherent telegraphic message had been received at the latter place from Delhi. But it was plain that the Meerut Sepoys had revolted. An hour afterwards, another message was brought to Anson, confirming the first tidings of revolt. Confused though it was, it indicated still more clearly than its predecessor, that the Native Cavalry prisoners at Meerut had escaped from gaol, that the Sepoys thence had joined the Delhi mutineers, and that there had been at both places a massacre of Europeans.*

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* The first telegram, as given in a letter from Anson to Lord Canning, ran thus: "We must leave office. All the bungalows are on fire—burning down by the Sepoys of Meerut. They came in this morning. We are

1857. May 12. When this intelligence reached the Commander-in-Chief, he did not at once take in its full significance; nor, indeed, did men of far greater Indian experience—the Head-quarter's Staff, by whom he was surrounded—perceive the dire purport of it. But he discerned at once that something must be done. He saw that the city of Delhi and the lives of all the Europeans were at the mercy of the insurgents; and that it was incumbent upon him to send down all the white troops that could be despatched from the Hills, to succour our imperilled people, if the flames of rebellion should spread. So he sent an Aide-de-camp to Kussowlee, on that day, with orders for the Seventy-fifth Foot to march to Umballah;* and, at the same time, the Company's European regiments at Dugshai and Sobathoo were directed to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice. But he did not put himself in motion. He wrote to Lord Canning, saying that he anxiously awaited further reports, and that if they were not favourable he should "at once proceed down to Umballah." He had scarcely despatched this letter, when a third telegraphic message was received, from which he learnt more distinctly what had happened at Meerut on the preceding Sunday. Next morning, he wrote again to Lord Canning, still saying that his

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off. Mr. C. Todd is dead, I think. He went out this morning, and has not yet returned. We learnt that nine Europeans are killed." This was received at three P.M. The second message, received at four, said: "Cantonments in a state of siege. Mutineers from Meerut—Third Light Cavalry—numbers not known—said to be a hundred and fifty men. Cut off communication with Meerut. Taken possession of the Bridge of Boats. Fifty-fourth Native Infantry sent against them, but would not act. Several officers killed and wounded. City in a state of considerable excitement. Troops sent down, but nothing known yet. Information will be forwarded."

* Captain Barnard had, on his way to Simlah, warned the Seventy-fifth to be ready to march on the arrival of orders from Head-Quarters.

1857. May 13.

own movements would depend upon the information he received. But he was beginning to discern more clearly the magnitude of the danger, and he ordered the two Fusilier Regiments to move down to Umballah,* and the Sirmoor battalion† to proceed from Dhera to Meerut. From the first he appears to have perceived clearly that the most pressing danger which threatened us was the loss of our Magazines. He felt that the great Magazine at Delhi, with its rich supplies of arms and ordnance stores, and implements of all kinds, must already be in possession of the mutineers, and he lost no time in taking measures to secure our other great military store-houses, by sending European troops for their defence. "I have sent express," he wrote to Lord Canning on the 13th, "to desire that the Fort at Ferozpore may be secured by the Sixty-first Foot, and the Fort at Govindghur by the Eighty-first. Two companies of the Eighth from Jullundhur to Phillour." The importance of securing the latter place could scarcely, indeed, be over-estimated.‡ How it was accomplished by the authorities of the Punjab will hereafter be told. In this place it need only be recorded that thence was it that the siege-train was to be drawn which was to open the way for our re-entrance into Delhi, or to perform any other

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* Major G. O. Jacob, of the First European Regiment, who happened to be at Simlah, rode down to Dugshai during the night, and warned the regiment early in the morning.

† A corps of brave and faithful Goorkahs, whose good services will be hereafter detailed.

‡ Mr. Cave-Browne says, "A report did float about the Punjab, the truth of which we have never heard denied, that one member of the Staff suggested that all European troops should concentrate on Phillour, and, taking boat down the Sutlej, make for England as fast as possible; another, however—one who, alas! fell among the earliest victims of the rebellion—suggested that the Phillour fort, with its large magazine, might be made available for a very different purpose. Hence the idea of a siege-train." This last was Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army.

1857. May. service that circumstances might demand from it in the operations to be now undertaken. An Artillery officer was despatched thither with all speed to make the necessary arrangements;* and the Goorkah Regiment, known as the Nusseree Battalion, and then believed to be loyal to the core, was ordered down from Jutogh, near Simlah, to form, with a detachment of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, an escort for the train from Phillour to Umballah. This was not more than any soldier of a few years' experience would have done; but as it was an important, though an obvious movement, and tended much to our subsequent success, it should be held in remembrance by all who say that in this conjuncture Anson did less.†

May 14. First movements of General Anson.

Before the day was spent, the Commander-in-Chief had made up his mind that he must quit Simlah. "I am just off for Umballah," he wrote to Lord Canning, at eight o'clock on the morning of the 14th. . . . "This is a most disastrous business," he added, "and it is not possible to see what will be the result. They say the King of Delhi is at the bottom of it. I doubt it; but I have no doubt that he has taken advantage of the opportunity, and is assisting the insurgents. . . . If the mutineers, having possession of the city, make their stand behind the walls, we shall want a good force and artillery. This must be collected at Kurnaul, as it would not be wise, I think, to divide the force we shall have and send part from Meerut on the opposite side of the river. But I hope to hear something which will enable me to decide what is best to be done when I get to Umballah." 1857. May 15.

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* Captain Worthington, who was on sick-leave at Simlah at the time..

† The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi" says: "On the 16th Sir John Lawrence telegraphed to Jullundhur to secure the Fort of Phillour. Two marches to the south, and commanding the bridge over the Sutlej, it contained the only magazine that could now furnish us with a siege-train, &c. &c." But it is clear that General Anson had sent instructions to this effect three days before.

He reached that place on the morning of the 15th, and many sinister reports met him there. It was plain that the Native regiments in the Punjab were in a state of open or suppressed mutiny, and, therefore, that he could not expect immediate assistance from that province. "We are terribly short of artillery ammunition," he wrote. "The two companies of Reserve Artillery I asked for from Lahore and Loodhianah cannot, of course, now be given, and we have no means of using the Siege-train. All the European troops within reach will be here on the 17th. If we move upon Delhi, I think it must be from Kurnaul. It is extraordinary how little we know of what is going on in other parts of the country—nothing whatever from Agra, Cawnpore, Oudh, &c." On the following day, he wrote again to Lord Canning, saying: "I have been doing my best to organise the Force here, ready for a move; but tents and carriages are not ready, and they are indispensable. We are also deficient in ammunition, which we are expecting from Phillour. I hope we shall be in a state to move shortly, if required. But we have no heavy guns for Delhi, if we are to attack the mutineers there. We must not fritter away or sacrifice the Europeans we have, unless for some great necessity."

The Umballah Regiments.

Many troubles and perplexities then beset him. It has been already shown that the Native Regiments at Umballah were in a state of smouldering mutiny, kept only from bursting into a blaze by the contiguity of European troops.* The incendiary work,

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* *Ante*, book iii. chapter v.

1857. May. which, in the preceding month, had so mystified the Commander-in-Chief and the General of Division, had by this time explained itself. It was clear that the Sepoys were ripe for revolt. With the strong European force now gathered at Umballah, Anson might have reduced them to impotence in an hour. To the vigorous understanding of Sir John Lawrence nothing was clearer than that the true policy, in that conjuncture, was to disarm the Native Regiments at Umballah before advancing upon Delhi; and he impressed this necessity upon Anson by telegraph and by post from Rawul-Pindee, but the Commander-in-Chief refused to sanction the measure.* It seemed to be an easy escape out of some difficulties which beset his position at Umballah. He had the wolf by the ears. He could not with safety carry the regiments with him, and he could not leave them behind. But he was met with remonstrances from officers on the spot, who protested that some pledges had been given to the Sepoys which could not honourably be broken, though in truth the Sepoys themselves had practically violated the compact, and there would have been no breach of faith in turning their treachery against themselves. It was, however, resolved to appeal only to their good feelings, and so they were left with arms in their hands to use them on a future day foully against us in return for our forbearance.†

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* See Punjab Report of May 25, 1858: "The Chief Commissioner conceived that the first step was to disarm these regiments, whom it was equally dangerous either to leave at Umballah or to take to Delhi. This course the Chief Commissioner lost no time in urging, but when the Commander-in-Chief took the matter in hand, the local military authorities pointed out that they had pledged themselves not to disarm the Sepoys. It was in vain urged per contra that the compact had been no sooner made than it was broken by the Sepoys themselves. There was not, indeed, the shadow of a reasonable hope that these men would prove faithful."

† It should not be omitted altogether from the narrative that on the 19th the Commander-in-Chief issued another address to the Native Army, in the shape of a General

1587.
May.

Mutiny of the Nussuree *Battalion.*

The panic on the Hills.

Another source of anxiety was this. Before the week had passed, news came to Umballah that the Goorkahs of the Nusseree Battalion, from no sympathy with the regular army, but from some *personal causes* of disaffection, had broken into revolt just when their services were wanted, had refused to march to Phillour, had plundered the Commander-in-Chief's baggage, and threatened to attack Simlah. Then there came a great cry of terror from the pleasant places which Anson had just quitted, and in which, only a few days before, the voice of joy and gladness had been resonant in a hundred happy homes. It was the season when our English ladies, some with their husbands, some without them, were escaping from the hot winds of the Northern Provinces and disporting themselves, in all the flush of renovated health and strength and new-born elasticity, under the cheering influence of the mountain breezes on the slopes of the Himalayahs. It might well have been regarded, in the first instance, as a happy circumstance that so many of our countrywomen were away from the military cantonments, in which mutiny and murder had so hideously displayed themselves; but when it was known that these joyous playgrounds were being stripped of their defences, and that if danger were to threaten the homes of our

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Order, in which, after adverting to the general uneasiness of the Sepoys and to his former efforts to allay it, he said: "His Excellency has determined that the new rifle-cartridge, and every new cartridge, shall be discontinued, and that in future balled ammunition shall be made up by each regiment for its own use by a proper establishment entertained for this purpose. The Commander-in-Chief solemnly assures the Army that no interference with their castes or religions was ever contemplated, and as solemnly he pledges his word and honour that none shall ever be exercised. He announces this to the Native Army in the full confidence that all will now perform their duty free from anxiety and care, and be prepared to stand and shed the last drop of their blood, as they have formerly done, by the side of the British troops, and in defence of the country." Such words in season might be good, but the season had long since passed.

1857. May. people there would be nothing but God's mercy to protect them, a feeling of insecurity and alarm arose, which needed but little to aggravate it into a great panic. When, therefore, tidings came that the Nusseree battalion, at a distance of some three or four miles from Simlah, had risen in rebellion, there was general consternation. It was rumoured that the officers and their families at Jutogh had been murdered, and that the Goorkahs were marching on Simlah intent on slaughter and spoliation. Then, for the greater part of two long days, many tasted the bitterness of death. The agony of terror swept our English families out of their holiday-homes, as with the besom of coming destruction; and in wild confusion men, women, and children streamed down towards the plains, or huddled together at the point esteemed to be best capable of defence.* Never, at any time or in any place, have the consummate gallantry of Englishmen and the heroic endurance of Englishwomen been more nobly—more beautifully—manifested than in the great conflict for supremacy, of which I am writing. But the incidents of those two days on the Hills are not to be regarded with national pride. The strong instinct of self-preservation was dominant over all. Men forgot their manhood in what seemed to be a struggle for life;† and it is not strange, therefore, that delicate ladies with little children clinging to them, should have abandoned themselves uncontrolledly to their fears.

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* This was the Bank. See Cave-Browne's "Punjab and Delhi in 1857," which contains an animated account of the two days' panic on the Hills. The writer says that at the Bank were congregated some four hundred of our Christian people, "of whom above a hundred were able-bodied men."

† Mr. Cave-Browne describes "ladies toiling along on foot, vainly trying to persuade, entreat, threaten the bearers to hurry on with their *jampans*, on which were their helpless children, while men were outbidding each other, and *outbidding ladies*, to secure bearers for their baggage."

1857. May.

But the panic was a groundless panic. The Nusseree battalion, though grossly insubordinate, was not intent on the murder of our people. The Goorkahs had grievances, real or supposed, to be redressed, and when certain concessions had been made to them, they returned to their allegiance, and afterwards became good soldiers.* And not without some feeling of shame our people went back to their deserted homes and found everything just as it had been left. Those, whose excited imaginations had seen blazing houses and household wrecks, re-entered their dwelling places to see with their fleshly eyes the unfinished letter on the desk and the embroidery on the work-table undisturbed by marauding hands. Even the trinkets of the ladies were as if they had never been out of the safest custody. But confidence, which is ever "a plant of slow growth," is slowest when once trampled or cut down; and it was long before our English families at the hill-stations recovered the serenity they had lost. Every officer fit for service was called to join his regiment, and the European soldiery were too much needed in the field to allow any force to be left for the protection of the tender congregation of women and children on the slopes of the great hills.†

Preparation of the Siege Train.

The Commander-in-Chief had, indeed, other things to consider than these social alarms. The defection of the Nusseree battalion was a source of perplexity

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* It is said that one of their principal causes of complaint was the fact that they had been ordered to march down to the plains, and that no arrangements had been made for the protection of their families in their absence. They were also in arrears of pay.

† Mr. Cave-Browne relates that as the Commander-in-Chief was riding out of Simlah, Mr. Mayne, the Chaplain, informed him that the station was in great danger from the number of "badmashes" in the Bazaars, and asked that some Europeans might be sent up for its protection. The General said that he could not spare any. "What, then, are the ladies to do?" asked the Chaplain. "The best they can," was the answer.

1857. May.

upon other grounds, as it was hard to say how the siege train could be escorted safely to Umballah. It was of the highest importance, at this time, that the European troops should be exposed as little as possible to the blazing heats of the summer sun. It was the sultriest season of the year, and cholera was already threatening our camp. The regiment of hardy Goorkahs, of whose loyalty there had been no previous doubt, were just the men for the work; and now their services were lost to us for a while. There was nothing, therefore, left but a resort to Hindostanee troops of doubtful fidelity, or to a contingent force supplied by a friendly Native chief. Meanwhile there was great activity in the magazine of Phillour. Day and night our troops, under Lieutenant Griffith, Commissary of Ordnance, toiled on incessantly to prepare the siege train and to supply ammunition of all kinds for the advancing army. A day, even an hour, lost, might have been fatal; for the Sutlej was rising, and the bridge of boats, by which the Train was to cross the river, might have been swept away before our preparations were complete.

The Departments.

But there were worse perplexities even than these. The elaborate organisation of the army which Anson commanded was found to be a burden and an encumbrance. The Chiefs of all the Staff-departments of the Army were at his elbow. They were necessarily men of large experience,—selected for their approved ability and extensive knowledge; and it was right that he should consult them. But Departments are ever slow to move—ever encumbered with a sense of responsibility, which presses upon them with the destructive force of paralysis. These Indian Military Departments were the best possible Departments in time of peace. They had immense masses of correspondence written up and endorsed with the most praiseworthy punctuality and precision. They were always prepared with a precedent; always ready to check an irregularity, and to chastise an over-zealous public servant not moving in the strictest grooves of Routine. It was, indeed, their especial function to suppress what they regarded as the superfluous activities of individual men; and individual men never did great things until they got fairly out of the reach of the Departments. They were nominally War Departments. There would have been no need of such Departments if war had been abolished from off the face of the land. But it was the speciality of these War Departments that they were never prepared for war. Surrounded as we were, within and without, with hostile populations, and living in a chronic state of danger from a multiplicity of causes, we yet were fully prepared for almost anything in the world but fighting. Without long delay we could place ourselves in neither a defensive nor an offensive attitude. We could "stand fast" as well as any nation in the world, but there was never any facility of moving. As soon as ever there came a necessity for action, it was found that action was impossible. The Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, the Commissary-General, the Chief of the Army Medical Department, each had his own special reason to give why the "thing" was "impossible." No ammunition—no carriages—no hospital stores—no doolies for the sick and wounded. Each head of a Department, indeed, had his own particular protest to fling in the face of the Commander-in-Chief. *Nunquam paratus* was his motto. It was the custom of Departments. It was the rule of the Service. No

1857.
May.

1857. May. one was at all ashamed of it. It had come down by official inheritance from one to the other, and the Chief of the Department merely walked in the pleasant paths which, years before, as a Deputy Assistant, he had trodden under some defunct Chief of pious memory. In a word, it was the system. Every now and then, some seer like Henry Lawrence rose up to protest against it. And when, in the plain language of common sense, the truth was laid bare to the public, some cried, "How true!" but the many smiled incredulously, and denounced the writer as an alarmist. And so General Anson, having found things in that normal state of unpreparedness in which his predecessors had delighted, had followed in their footsteps, nothing doubting, until suddenly brought face to face with a dire necessity, he found that everything was in its wrong place. The storm-signals were up, but the life-boat was in the church-steeple, and no one could find the keys of the church.*

It was not strange, therefore, that Anson felt it would not be prudent, with the means then at his disposal, to risk "an enterprise on Delhi." "It becomes now a matter for your consideration," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence on the 17th, "whether it would be prudent to risk the small European force we have here in an enterprise on Delhi. I think not. It is wholly, in my opinion, insufficient for the purpose. The walls could, of course, be battered down with heavy guns. The entrance might be opened, and little resistance offered. But so few men in a great city, with such narrow streets, and an immense armed population, who knew every turn and corner of them, would, it appears to me, be in a very dangerous position, and if six or seven hundred were disabled, what would remain? Could we hold it with the whole country around against us? Could we either stay in or out of it? My own view of the state of things now is, that by carefully collecting our resources, having got rid of the bad materials which we cannot trust, and having supplied their places with others of a better sort, it would not be very long before we could proceed without a chance of failure, in whatever direction we might please. Your telegraphic message informing me of the measures which you have taken to raise fresh troops confirms me in this opinion. I must add, also, that this is now the opinion of all here whom I have consulted upon it—the Major-General and Brigadier, the Adjutant-General, Quarter-master-General, and Commissary-General. The latter has, however, offered a positive impediment to it, in the impossibility of providing what would be necessary for such an advance under from sixteen to twenty days. I thought it could have been done in less; but that was before I had seen Colonel Thomson. Indeed, it is very little more than forty-eight hours since I came here, and every turn produces something which may alter a previous opinion."*

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* On the 18th of May General Barnard wrote from Umballah, saying: "And now that they [the European regiments] are collected, without tents, without ammunition, the men have not twenty rounds apiece. Two troops of Horse Artillery, twelve guns, but no reserve ammunition, and their waggons at Loodianah—seven days' off! Commissariat without sufficient transport at hand. This is the boasted Indian Army, and this is the force with which the civilians would have us go to Delhi."—Compare also letter quoted ~~in the~~ text, page 165.

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* The views of General Anson at this time are thus stated in an unpublished memoir by Colonel Baird Smith, from which other quotations will be made: "It is generally understood that the course which recommended itself most to his mind was one strongly opposed to the popular instinct at the moment. Recognising, as all conversant with military affairs could not fail to do, that strategically considered the position of a weak force at Delhi must be, if not utterly false, yet of extreme

1857. May. Correspondence with Lord Canning.

But these doubts were but of brief duration. Let Adjutants-General, and Quarter-masters-General, and Commissaries-General suggest what difficulties they might, there were other powers, to North and South, in whose sight all delay, in such a crisis, was an offence and an abomination. Lord Canning, from Calcutta, and Sir John Lawrence, from the Punjab, flashed to the Head Quarters of the Army emphatic messages, urging Anson to move on Delhi, with such force as he could gather; and followed up their eager telegrams with letters scarcely less eager. The Governor-General, to whom Anson had not communicated the views which he had expressed in the preceding letter to the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, was overjoyed by the thought that there was so much activity at Head-Quarters. Encouraged by the earlier letters of the Military Chief, and still more by a message he had received from Mr. Colvin, at Agra, Canning wrote on the 17th to Anson, saying that he learnt the good news "with intense pleasure." "For," he added, "I doubted whether you would be able to collect so strong a body of troops in the time. I cannot doubt that it will now prove amply sufficient, and I am very grateful to you for enabling me to feel confident on this point. An unsuccessful demonstration against Delhi, or even any appearance of delay in proceeding to act, when once our force is on the spot, would have a most injurious effect—I mean in Bengal generally. Every station

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danger, he is believed to have advocated the withdrawal of the small and isolated detachments on the Doab, and the concentration of the whole available British force between the Sutlej and the Jumna, there to await the arrival of reinforcements by the line of the Indus, and, while permitting the fire of revolt to burn as fiercely as it might within the limits indicated, to check its spread beyond them on the northward, and ultimately to proceed to quench it with means that would make the issue certain."—*Unpublished Memoir by Colonel Baird Smith. MS.*

and cantonment is in a state of excitement, and anything in the nature of a check would give confidence to the disaffected regiments, which might lead to something worse than the horrors of Delhi. Allahabad, Benares, Oudh (except Lucknow, which I believe to be safe), and a host of places of less importance where Native troops are alone, will continue to be a source of much anxiety until Delhi is disposed of. It is for this that I have telegraphed to you to make as short work as possible of the rebels, who have cooped themselves up there, and whom you cannot crush too remorselessly. I should rejoice to hear that there had been no holding our men, and that the vengeance had been terrible."

Correspondence with Sir John Lawrence.

Whilst Lord Canning was thus expressing his gratitude to Anson, Sir John Lawrence, who was nearer the scene of action, and in closer communication with the Commander-in-Chief, knowing better what were the prevailing counsels at Head Quarters, was urgent in his remonstrances against delay. He knew the temper of the people well; and nothing was clearer to the eye of his experience than that, in the conjuncture which had arisen, it was necessary above all things to maintain an appearance of successful activity. Any semblance of paralysis at such a time must, he knew, be fatal to us. At such periods the Natives of India wait and watch. It is in conformity with the genius of a people, equally timid and superstitious, to be worshippers of success. John Lawrence knew well that if at any time the English in India should betray symptoms of irresolution in the face of danger, thousands and tens of thousands, believing that the day of our supremacy is past, would first fall away from, and then rise against their masters. But we had reached an epoch in the

1857 May History of our great Indian Empire at which the impression of our coming fall was stronger than it had ever been before, and there were those who, on the first sign of weakness in our camp, would have pointed exultingly to the beginning of the end. It was not a time, indeed, to calculate military means and resources, or to regard strategical principles in the conduct of our armies; but simply to move and strike—to move somewhere and to strike some one. And it was to this necessity of prompt and vigorous action that the counsels of John Lawrence ever pointed—not to any particular line of procedure to be dictated to the Military Chief. "I do not myself," he wrote to Anson, on the 21st of May, "think that the country anywhere is against us—certainly not from here to within a few miles of Delhi. I served for nearly thirteen years in Delhi, and know the people well. My belief is, that with good management on the part of the Civil officers, it would open its gates on the approach of our troops. It seems incredible to conceive that the mutineers can hold and defend it. Still, I admit that on military principles, in the present state of affairs, it may not be expedient to advance on Delhi; certainly not until the Meerut force is prepared to act, which it can only be when set free. Once relieve Meerut, and give confidence to the country, no difficulty regarding carriage can occur. By good arrangements the owners will come forward, but in any case it can be collected. From Meerut you will be able to form a sound judgment on the course to be followed. If the country lower down be disturbed, and the Sepoys have mutinied, I conceive it would be a paramount duty to march that way, relieve each place, and disarm or destroy the mutineers. If, on the other hand, all were safe, it would be a question whether you should consolidate your resources there, or march on Delhi. I think it must be allowed that our European troops are not placed at this or that station simply to hold it, but to be ready to move wherever they may be required. Salubrious and centrical points for their location were selected; but so long as we maintain our prestige and keep the country quiet, it cannot signify how many cantonments we abandon. But this we cannot do, if we allow two or three Native corps to checkmate large bodies of Europeans. It will then be a mere question of time, by slow degrees, but of a certainty the Native troops must destroy us. We are doing all we can to strengthen ourselves, and to reinforce you, either by direct or indirect means.* But can your Excellency suppose for one moment that the Irregular troops will remain staunch, if they see our European soldiers cooped up in their cantonments, tamely awaiting the progress of events. Your Excellency remarks that we must carefully collect our resources; but what are these resources, but our European soldiers, our guns, and our matériel: these are all ready at hand, and only require to be handled wisely and vigorously to produce great results. We have money also, and the control of the country. But if disaffection spread, insurrection will follow, and we shall then neither be able to collect the revenue, nor procure supplies." "Pray," he continued, "only reflect on the whole history of India. Where have we failed, when we acted vigorously? Where have we succeeded, when guided by timid counsels? Clive, with twelve hundred, fought at Plassey in

1857. May.

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* This is to be understood as referring to the measures taken in the Punjab.

1857. May. opposition to the advice of his leading officers, beat forty thousand men, and conquered Bengal. Monson retreated from the Chumbul, and before he gained Agra, his army was disorganised and partially annihilated. Look at the Caubul catastrophe. It might have been averted by resolute and bold action. The Irregulars of the Army, the Kuzzilbashes, in short our friends, of whom we had many, only left us when they found we were not true to ourselves. How can it be supposed that strangers and mercenaries will sacrifice everything for us? There is a point up to which they will stand by us, for they know that we have always been eventually successful, and that we are good masters; but go beyond this point, and every man will look to his immediate benefit, his present safety. The Punjab Irregulars are marching down in the highest spirits, proud to be trusted, and eager to show their superiority over the Regular troops—ready to fight, shoulder to shoulder, with the Europeans. But if, on their arrival, they find the Europeans behind breastworks, they will begin to think that the game is up. Recollect that all this time, while we are halting, the emissaries of the mutineers are writing to, and visiting, every cantonment. . . . I cannot comprehend what the Commissariat can mean by requiring from sixteen to twenty days to procure provisions. I am persuaded that all you can require to take with you must be procurable in two or three. ... We have had an extraordinary good harvest, and supplies must be abundant between Umballah and Meerut. The greater portion of the country is well cultivated. We are sending our troops in every direction without difficulty, through tracts which are comparatively desert. Our true policy is to trust the Maharajah of Putteeala, and Rajah of Jheend, and the country generally, for they have shown evidence of being on our side, but utterly to distrust the regular Sepoys. I would spare no expense to carry every European soldier—at any rate, to carry every other one. By alternately marching and riding, their strength and spirits will be maintained. We are pushing on the Guides, the Fourth Sikhs, the First and Fourth Punjab regiments of Infantry, from different parts of the Punjab, in this way. If there is any officer in the Punjab whom your Excellency would wish to have at your side, pray don't hesitate to apply for him. There is a young officer now at Head Quarters, who, though young in years, has seen much service, and proved himself an excellent soldier. I allude to Captain Norman, of the Adjutant-General's office. Sir Colin Campbell had the highest opinion of his judgment; and when he left Peshawur it was considered a public loss." 1857. May.

Of the exceeding force and cogency of this no doubt can be entertained. It was the right language for the crisis—rough, ready, and straight to the point. The great Punjab Commissioner, with his loins girt about, eager for the encounter, impatient to strike, was not in a mood to make gentle allowances or to weigh nice phrases of courteous discourse. But, in what he wrote, he intended to convey no reproaches to the Military Chief. It was simply the irrepressible enthusiasm of a nature, impatient of departmental dallyings and regulation restraints, and in its own utter freedom from all fear of responsibility not quite tolerant of the weakness of those who, held back by a fear of failure, shrink from encountering heroic risks. It was not that he mistrusted the man Anson, but that he mistrusted all the cum-

1857. May. brous machinery of the Head-Quarters Departments, which never had been found ripe for sudden action—never had improvised an expedition or precipitated an enterprise, ever since Departments were created—though, in truth, he could not see that in the machinery itself there was anything to unfit it for prompt action. "I should greatly regret," he wrote two days afterwards, "if any message or letter of mine should annoy you. I have written warmly and strongly in favour of an advance, because I felt assured that such was the true policy. However much we may be taken by surprise, our military organisation admits of prompt action. The country is almost sure to be with us, if it were only that we save them from trouble; and this will more especially be the case in an affair like the present, when we have really to contend only with our own troops, with whom the people can have no sympathy." The Commissariat, in such a case, is ever the chief stumbling-block; and the impediments thrown up are those of which military men take the most, and civilians the least, account. Anson was told at Umballah that they were insuperable. But John Lawrence, at Rawul-Pindee, could not recognise the force of the obstructive argument. "I cannot comprehend," he wrote to Anson, "why Colonel Thomson requires so much supplies. To carry so much food with the troops is to encumber the column and waste our money. To guard against accidents, three or four days' supplies should be taken, but no more. My belief is, that ten thousand troops might march all over the North-West, and, provided they paid for what they required, no difficulty in obtaining supplies would be experienced." It is plain, too, that at this time the Delhi difficulty was, in the Punjab, held to be a light one, for Lawrence added: "I still think that no real resistance at Delhi will be attempted; but, of course, we must first get the Meerut force in order, and, in moving against Delhi, go prepared to fight. My impression is, that, on the approach of our troops, the mutineers will either disperse, or the people of the city rise and open their gates."*

1857. May.

Final orders of the Civil Government.

Whether General Anson ever recognised the fact that the conjuncture was one in which all rules of warfare must bow their necks to stern political necessity, is not very apparent; but if he still maintained his opinions as a soldier, he knew well that it was his duty to yield his judgment to the authority of the supreme Civil power; and when he received an emphatic enunciation of the views of the Governor-General, he prepared to march down upon Delhi. "I regret," he wrote to the Governor-General on the 23rd of May, "that it has not been possible to move sooner upon Delhi. The force is so small that it must not be frittered away. You say in your Telegraphic Message that Delhi must be recovered, 'but [the operations] to be undertaken by a strong British force.' There is not this in the country. We have collected all within reach. I venture to say that not an hour has been lost, and that the movement of the troops from Umballah will have been accomplished in a space of time which was not considered possible on my arrival here." And he concluded his letter by

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* In a previous letter (May 21) Lawrence had written: "At Delhi the Sepoys have murdered their officers and taken our guns, but even there they did not stand. No number of them can face a moderate body of Europeans fairly handled. Of late years, even when fighting under our own banners, in a good cause, with European officers at their head, and English comrades at their side, they have seldom done anything; as mutineers they cannot fight—they will burn, destroy, and massacre, but not fight."

1857. May. saying: "I should be glad to know whether you consider the Force with which I propose to attack Delhi sufficient—and, namely, 'a strong British Force.'" May 23. He had by this time clearly calculated his available strength for the great enterprise before him—and it was this, as detailed in a letter which he wrote to General Hewitt at Meerut: "The force from Umballah consists of the Ninth Lancers, one squadron of the Fourth Lancers, Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot, First European Regiment, Second European Regiment, Sixtieth Native Infantry, two troops of Horse Artillery. They are formed into two small brigades. Brigadier Halifax commands the first. . . Brigadier Jones the second brigade. Four companies of the First Fusileers, one squadron of Ninth Lancers, two guns, Horse Artillery, were moved to Kurnaul on the 17th, and arrived on the 20th. Six companies of the First Fusileers followed on the 21st. Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot and Sixtieth Regiment of Native Infantry marched on the 22nd. One squadron Ninth Lancers and four guns will march on the 24th or 25th. The above will be at Kurnaul on the 28th. The Second Europeans, third troop third brigade of Horse Artillery will probably follow on the 26th. The whole will be at Kurnaul on the 30th. I propose then to advance with the column towards Delhi on the 1st, and be opposite to Baghput on the 5th. At this place I should wish to be joined by the force from Meerut. To reach it four days may be calculated on." "A small siege train," he added, "has left Loodianah, and is expected here on the 26th. It will require eleven days to get it to Delhi. It may join us at Baghput on or about the 6th, the day after that I have named for the junction of your force. I depend on your supplying at least one hundred and twenty Artillerymen to work it. You will bring, besides, according to statement received, two squadrons of Carabineers, a wing of the Sixtieth Rifles, one light field battery, one troop of Horse Artillery, and any Sappers you can depend upon, and of course the non-commissioned European officers belonging to them." 1857. May.

Whilst Anson was writing this from Umballah, Lord Canning was telegraphing a message to him, through the Lieutenant-Governor of Agra, announcing the reinforcements which were expected at Calcutta, and adding that everything depended "upon disposing speedily of Delhi, and making a terrible example. No amount of severity can be too great. I will support you in any degree of it." There was nothing uncertain in this sound. But it is clear that the Governor-General, in his eagerness to strike a sudden and a heavy blow at the enemy, very much under-rated the military difficulties with which Anson was called upon to contend, and believed overmuch in the facile execution of the impossible; for, on the 31st of May, he telegraphed again to the Commander-in-Chief, saying: "I have heard to-day that you do not expect to be before Delhi till the 9th (June). In the mean time Cawnpore and Lucknow are severely pressed, and the country between Delhi and Cawnpore is passing into the hands of the rebels. It is of the utmost importance to prevent this, and to relieve Cawnpore. But rapid action will do it. Your force of Artillery will enable you to dispose of Delhi with certainty. I therefore beg that you will detach one European Infantry Regiment and a small force of European Cavalry to the south of Delhi, without keeping them for operations there, so that Alighur may be recovered and Cawnpore relieved immediately. It is

1857. May. impossible to overrate the importance of showing European troops between Delhi and Cawnpore, Lucknow and Allahabad, depend upon it."

It is easy to conceive what would have been the perplexity in General Anson's mind, if he had received these instructions. The recovery of Delhi seemed to be an enterprise beyond the reach of the slender means at his disposal; but he was expected also to operate in the country beyond, and in the straits of his weakness to display strength on an extensive field of action. The Army was already on its way to Delhi. For whilst the Military Departments were protesting their inability to move the Army, the Civilians at Umballah—officially the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, and the Deputy Commissioner of the district, individually Mr. George Barnes and Mr. Douglas Forsyth—were putting forth their strength, moving all the agents beneath them, and employing the influence which their position had given them among the people to accomplish promptly and effectually the great object now to be attained. It little mattered if, at such a time, the ordinary civil business were temporarily suspended. It behoved, at such a moment, every man to be more or less a soldier. So the civil officers, not only at Umballah, but all around it, in the important country between the Jumna and the Sutlej, went to work right manfully in aid of the military authorities; collected carts, collected cattle, collected coolies, and brought together and stored in Umballah large supplies of grain for the army.* And this, too, in the

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* Mr. Barnes, in his official report, has recorded that, "As soon as it was seen by the Commander-in-Chief that an onward movement should be made, a sudden difficulty arose in the want of carriages. The Deputy-Commissary General having officially declared his inability to meet the wants of the army, the Civil Authorities were called upon to supply

1857. May.

face of difficulties and impediments which would have dismayed and obstructed less earnest workmen; for ever, after the fashion of their kind, Natives of all classes stood aloof, waiting and watching the issue of events; from the capitalist to the coolie all shrunk alike from rendering active assistance to those whose power might be swept away in a day.

Protected Sikh Chiefs.

There were other important services, which at this time the civil officers rendered to their country; doing, indeed, that without which all else would have been in vain. In the country between the Jumna and the Sutlej were the great chiefs of what were known as the "Protected Sikh States." These states, at the commencement of the century, we had rescued by our interference from the grasp of Runjeet Singh, and ever since the time when the Rajah of Puteealah placed in the hands of young Charles Metcalfe the keys of his fort, and said that all he possessed was at the service of the British Government, those chiefs, secure in the possession of their rights, had been true to the English alliance. They had survived the ruin of the old Sikh Empire, and were grateful to us for the protection which we had afforded and the independence which we had preserved. There are seasons in the lives of all nations, when faith is weak and temptation is strong, and, for a little space, the Cis-Sutlej chiefs, when the clouds of our first trouble were lowering over us, may have been beset with doubts and perplexities and fears of siding with the weaker party. Their hesitation, however, was short-lived.

the demand. At Umballah there has ever been a difficulty to furnish cattle of any kind, the carts being of a very inferior description; however, such as they were, they had to be pressed into service, and in the course of a week, after the utmost exertions, five hundred carts, two thousand camels, and two thousand coolies were made over to the Commissariat Department; thirty thousand maunds of grain were likewise collected and stored for the Army in the town of Umballah."

1857. May. The excellent tact of Douglas Forsyth, who took upon himself the responsibility of calling upon the Maharajah of Puteealah for assistance, smoothed down the apprehensions of that chief, and he took his course manfully and consistently, never swerving from the straight path of his duty. The chiefs of Jheend and Nabha followed his example, and were equally true to the British alliance.* It was of the utmost importance, at that time, that the road from Umballah to Kurnaul should be kept open; for it was to the latter place—once a flourishing military cantonment, but at the time of which I am writing deserted and decayed—that the troops from Umballah were now marching; and there the fugitives from Delhi had mostly assembled, and something of an attempt had been made to re-establish the shattered edifice of British authority upon a fragment of the ruins of Delhi.† Above all, to hold Kurnaul was to keep open the communications between Umballah and Meerut, and so to facilitate the junction of the forces from those two points. Happily for us, in this juncture the Newab of Kurnaul, a Mahomedan nobleman and land-owner of large influence in that part of the country, threw the weight of his personal power into the scales on our side.* This, doubtless, was great help to us; and when the Jheend Rajah sent down his troops to Kurnaul, the danger of a general rising of the mixed population of that part of the country had passed away. The Contingent arrived on the night of the 18th, and on the following morning the first detachment of Europeans marched into the cantonment.† Meanwhile, the Puteealah Rajah was occupying Thaneysur, on the great high road between Umballah and Kurnaul, and thus the communication between these two important points was fully secured.

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* See Mr. Barnes's report. "The first object was to provide for the safety of the Grand Trunk Road and the two stations of Thanesur and Loodhianah, which were without reliable troops. I accordingly directed the Rajah of Jheend to proceed to Kurnaul with all his available force. The Maharajah of Puteealah, at my request, sent a detachment of all arms, and three guns, under *his brother*, to Thanesur on the Grand Trunk Road between Umballah and Kurnaul. The Rajah of Nabha and *the Newab of Malair Kotela* were requested to march with their men to Loodhianah, and the Rajah of Fureedpore was desired to place himself under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore. Thus all points of the main line of road were secured, and the Rajah of Jheend was also instructed to collect supplies and carriages for the field force, to protect the station of Kurnaul, &c." It should be added that Sir John Lawrence had telegraphed on the 13th to "get the Maharajah of Puteealah to send one regiment *to Thanesur and another to Loodhianah.*" *The policy from the first* was to trust the great Cis-Sutlej Chiefs. *See also note in the Appendix.*

† Brigadier Graves and Mr. Le Bas, who had effected their escape from Delhi, were the representatives of the military and civil authority.

At the distance of a few miles from the station of Kurnaul lies the town of Paniput, a place famous in Indian annals; for there, on the neighbouring plain, had great armies contended, and thrice with tremendous carnage the destinies of India had been decided on its battle-fields. At this point the bulk of the Jheend Contingent was now posted, and as fresh detachments of the army from Umballah marched into Kurnaul, the advanced guard pushed on to Paniput, where it was presently joined by the rear companies of the Fusileers, two more squadrons of the Lancer regiment, and four guns. The Europeans, weakened though they were by the burning heats of May, were eager for the conflict, and already there had grown up amongst them that intense hatred of the

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* Mr. Raikes states, in his "Notes on the Revolt," that "When we had no military force near Kurnaul, and all men watched anxiously the conduct of each local chief, the Newab of Kurnaul went to Mr. Le Bas and addressed him to the following effect, 'Sir, I have spent a sleepless night in meditating on the state of affairs; I have decided to throw in my lot with yours. My sword, my purse, and my followers are at your disposal.'"

† This advanced detachment consisted of four companies of the First Fusileers, two Horse Artillery guns, and a squadron of the Ninth Lancers.

1857. May. Native races which afterwards bore such bitter fruit, for even then they were beginning to see before them evidences of the destroying hand of the Insurgent.

May 27. Death of General Anson. With the last of the European Regiments General Anson left Umballah, on the 25th of May; and, on the 26th, he was lying at Kurnaul, helpless and hopeless, on the bed of death, in the mortal agonies of the great pest of the country. On the following day, Sir Henry Barnard arrived in Camp, a little after midnight, just in time, as he said, to receive the dying farewell of his chief. Anson was all but gone; but he recognised his friend, and, in a faint voice, articulated: "Barnard, I leave you the command. You will say how anxious I have been to do my duty. I cannot recover. May success attend you. God bless you. Good-bye."* And another hour had not spent itself before General George Anson had passed beyond the reach of all human praise or censure. The great responsibility thrown upon the Chief-Commander had filled him with mental anxiety, which had increased the depressing influences of over-fatigue and exposure to the climate in the most trying season of the year. He had evinced much tender consideration for the health of his men, and he was one of the first to be struck down by the fiery blasts of the Indian summer. He was a brave soldier and an honest gentleman; and another brave soldier and honest gentleman, whilst the corpse lay unburied in the next room, wrote a letter, saying: "I solemnly declare to you on my character as an officer, who, at all events, came to this country with the prestige of recent service with him, that not an hour has been lost in getting the small force now advanced as far as Paniput, and I hope to keep pushing on, as fast as I can get them up, on Delhi. The day I heard of the disaster at Delhi—which at Umballah preceded any account from Meerut—I immediately despatched my son, who rode to Simlah during the night to warn the Commander-in-Chief, and bring him down. He has himself detailed all his movements to you, and I cannot but entertain hope, had he lived, you would have taken a different view of his conduct, and not attributed any want of energy to him. Whatever might have been accomplished by an immediate rush from Meerut could not be expected from Umballah. The European troops were all in the Hills. Nothing but three regiments of Native troops and some Artillery Europeans were at the latter place; and when the Regiments on the Hills were assembled, the General was met by protests against his advance by the leading Staff and Medical Officers of his Army. The Commissariat declared their utter inability to move the troops; the Medical men represented theirs to provide the requisite attendants and bearers. Still matters went on. Troops were moved as fast as could be done, and arrangements made to meet the difficulty of bearers. Ammunition had to be procured from Phillour, for the men had not twenty rounds in their pouches, and none in store; and the Artillery were inefficient, as their reserve waggons were all at Loodhianah. It is only this day that I expect the necessary supply of ammunition to arrive at Umballah. I have determined (I say *I*, for poor Anson could only recognise me and hand me over the command when I arrived last night) not to wait for the siege-train."* 1857. May.

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* Letter of Sir H. Barnard to Sir Charles Yorke, May 27, 1857. "This," he adds, "was at half-past one A.M. on the 27th; at 2.15 he breathed his last." Cholera was the immediate cause of his death.

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* Sir Henry Barnard to Sir John Lawrence, May 27, 1857. MS.

1857. May.

General Barnard in command.

Thus passed away from the scene one of its chief actors, just as the curtain had risen on the great drama of British action. With what success Anson might have played his distinguished part can now be only conjectured. There are those who believe that alike in wisdom and integrity he far outshone all his colleagues in the Supreme Council, and that when the crisis arrived he took in the situation and measured the work to be done with an accuracy and precision which none beside, soldier or civilian, brought to bear upon the opening incidents of the War.* Little time was allowed to him to recover from the first shock of the storm before it overwhelmed and destroyed him. But it would be unjust to estimate what he did, or what he was capable of doing, by the measuring-rod of those who, during that eventful fortnight, believed that the recovery of Delhi was to be accomplished by the prompt movement of a small and imperfectly equipped British force. It is not in cotemporary utterances that we are to look for a just verdict. We must put aside all thought, indeed, of what even the wisest and the strongest said in the first paroxysm of perplexity, when all men looked to the Chief of the Army to do what then seemed to be easy, and found that it was not done. How difficult it really was will presently appear. And though the result of a sudden blow struck at Delhi might have been successful, it is impossible, with our later knowledge of subsequent events to guide us, not to believe that in the month of May the risk of failure was greater than the fair prospect of success. And we may be sure that if Anson had flung himself headlong upon the stronghold of the enemy and failed, he would have been stigmatised as a rash and incapable general, ignorant of the first principles of war. 1857. May.

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* See the statements of the author of the "Red Pamphlet:" "It was a common practice to sneer at General Anson as a mere Horse Guards' General, as one who had gained his honours at Newmarket. But it is nevertheless a fact that this Horse Guards' General, by dint of application and perseverance, made himself so thoroughly a master of his profession, that, when the mutiny broke out, he drew up a plan of operations, which his successor, a Crimean General, carried out in all its details, rejecting as crude and ridiculous the suggestions sent up by the collective wisdom of Calcutta." History may not unwillingly accept this; but when it is said that General Anson, "when brought, in both the Councils"—that is, the Executive and Legislative Councils—"face to face with men who had made legislation for India the study of their lives, distanced them all," one cannot help being somewhat startled by the boldness of the assertion.

Summing up of Lord Canning.

Perhaps the judgment of Lord Canning on these initial delays and their causes may be accepted as sound and just. "The protracted delay," he wrote, "has been caused, as far as I can gather from private letters from General Anson since I last wrote, by waiting for the siege-train, and by want of carriage for the Europeans. As regards the siege-train, I believe it to have been an unwise delay. We shall crush Delhi more easily, of course; but I do not believe that we should have been exposed to any reverse for want of a siege-train, and the time lost has cost us dear indeed. As to the carriage and Commissariat, it is impossible, in the absence of all information, to say how far the delay was avoidable and blameable. It would have been madness to move a European force at this season with any deficiency of carriage (with cholera, too, amongst them), but I greatly doubt whether General Anson was well served in this matter of carriage. From many letters from Head Quarters which have been before me, I am satisfied that, with the exception of one young officer,* there was not a man on the Army Staff who gave due thought to the political dangers of delay and to

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* It need scarcely be said that the officer here indicated was Captain, now (1869) Colonel, Norman, who has abundantly justified all the high opinions of his character then entertained.

1857. May.

the perils which hung over us elsewhere as long as no move was made upon Delhi. With the Staff, the Medical Staff especially, arguing the necessity of completeness, and none of them apparently conscious of the immense value of time, it is very probable that time was lost. On this subject you will see a letter from Sir John Lawrence to the Commander-in-Chief. It is very earnest and practical, like all that comes from him, and I wish with all my heart that he had been nearer to Head Quarters. His counsels and his thorough knowledge of the country would have been invaluable. You must bear in mind, however, in regard to his estimate of the time which should have been sufficient to put the army in motion, that a great change was made in the Commissariat three years ago, when the Transport establishments were given up, and it was determined to trust henceforward to hiring beasts for the occasion. We are now making the first experiment of this change. Economically, it was a prudent one, and in times of ordinary war might work well; but I shall be surprised if General Anson were not greatly impeded by it. Could it have been foreseen that our next operations would be against our own regiments and subjects, no sane man would have recommended it."

From the death-bed of General Anson Sir Henry Barnard had received his instructions to take command of the Delhi Field Force. And taking that command, he cast up at once the difficulties of his position. He thought that if Anson's death had not been accelerated, his last moments had been embittered, by the reproaches of eager-minded civilians, who could not measure military difficulties as they are measured by soldiers; and he felt that, in the execution of his duty to his country, he might bring like censure upon himself. He was in a novel and wholly unanticipated position,* and he felt that he was expected to do what was impossible. But he went resolutely at the work before him; and flung himself into it with an amount of energy and activity which excited the admiration and surprise of much younger men. He determined, on the morning of the 27th, not to wait for the siege-train, but, after exchanging his six-pounders for eight-pounders, to march on to Delhi, forming a junction on the way with the Meerut force under Brigadier Wilson. "So long as I exercise any power," he wrote to Lawrence on the day after Anson's death, "you may rest assured that every energy shall be devoted to the objects I have now in view, viz., concentrating all the force I can collect, at Delhi, securing the bridge at Baghput, and securing our communications with Meerut. For those objects all is now in actual motion. The last column left Umballah last night, and the siege-train will follow under escort, provided by Mr. Barnes. I have noticed to the Commissariat that supplies will be required, and hope that, when within two days' march of Delhi, our presence may have the influence you anticipate, and you may soon hear of our being in possession of the place." On the 31st he wrote from Gurrounda: "I am preparing with the Commanding Engineer the plan of the position to take up

1857.
May.

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* "It is a novel position," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, "for an officer to find himself placed in who comes to the country prepared to treat its army as his own; to make every allowance for the difference of constitution; to encourage its past good deeds and honourable name; to have 'side blows of reproof,' because he has not treated them with the utmost severity and rather sought occasion to disgrace than endeavour to support them. That I have endeavoured to support them I fully admit, and, if a fault, I must bear the blame."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. May. when we reach Delhi, and hope that no let or hindrance will prevent our being ready to act upon the place by the 5th."

The force from Umballah was now in full march upon Delhi. The scorching heat of the summer, which was taking terrible effect upon the health of the European soldiery, forbade much marching in the daytime. The fierce sun beat down upon the closed tents of our people, and as they lay in weary sleep, or vainly courting it, there was stillness, almost as of death, in our camp. But with the coolness of evening Life returned. The lassitude was gone. Men emerged from their tents and were soon in all the bustle and preparation of the coming march. The clear starlit nights are said to have been "delicious."* But as the English soldier marched on beneath that great calm canopy of heaven, there was within him the turmoil and the bitterness of an avenging thirst for blood. It fared ill with those against whom charges were brought of inflicting injury upon fugitives from Delhi. Some villagers, believed to be thus guilty, were seized, tried, condemned, and executed amidst every possible indignity that could be put upon them by our soldiers under the approving smiles of their officers.† And ever as they marched on, there was an eager desire to find criminals and to execute judgment upon them; and it was not easy for the hands of authority to restrain the retributive impulses of our people.

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* See the "History of the Siege of Delhi, by One who Served there" for a very animated account of the march.

† "The fierceness of the men increased every day, often venting itself on the camp-servants, many of whom ran away. The prisoners, during the few hours between their trial and execution, were unceasingly tormented by the soldiers. They pulled their hair, pricked them with their bayonets, and forced them to eat cow's flesh, while officers stood by approving."—*History of the Siege of Delhi by One who Served there.*

The day of action was now not far distant; and all believed that it would be a day of signal retribution. "Most of the men," it has been said, "believed that one battle would decide the fate of the mutinous regiments. They would fight in the morning; they would drink their grog in Delhi at night."[*] Even the sick, in the hospital tents, sat up, declared that they were well, and with feeble voices implored to be discharged that they might be led against the hated enemy. But Barnard's force was weak, and impatient as were his troops to push forward, it was necessary that they should form a junction with Wilson's brigade, which was advancing from Meerut, on the other side of the river. What that brigade had done since the disastrous night of the 10th of May must now be briefly related.

1857 May

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[*] "The History of the Siege of Delhi, by One who Served there."

CHAPTER VI.

STATE OF MEERUT—THE SAPPERS AND MINERS—DEFENCE OF ROORKHEE—COLONEL BAIRD SMITH—MUTINY OF THE SAPPERS—MARCH OF WILSON'S BRIGADE—BATTLES OF THE HINDUN—JUNCTION WITH BARNARD—BATTLE OF BUDLEE-KA-SERAI—POSITION BEFORE DELHI.

1857. Meerut after the Outbreak. May 12—27.

On the day after that dreadful night at Meerut, which witnessed the first horrors of the revolt, it was the effort of the authorities to concentrate all the surviving Europeans, and such property as could be saved, within the English quarter of the great Cantonment. All the outlying picquets and sentries were therefore recalled; and all who lived beyond the new line of defence were brought in and lodged in a capacious public building used as the Artillery School of Instruction, and known as the Dumdumma. There also the treasure was brought from the Collectorate, and safely guarded against the plunderers, who were roving about the place. For the predatory classes were now making high festival, the escaped convicts from the gaols, the Goojurs from the neighbouring villages, and all the vile scum and refuse of the bazaars were glorying in the great paralysis of authority which had made crime so easy and so profitable. From the Cantonment the great harvest of rapine stretched out into the surrounding district. There was no respect of persons, races, or creeds. All who had anything to lose and lacked strength to defend it, were ruthlessly despoiled by the marauders. Travellers were stopped on the highway; the mails were plundered; houses were forcibly entered and sacked, and sometimes all the inmates butchered.* And so entirely had all semblance of British authority disappeared, that it was believed that the English in Meerut had been slain to a man.†

Meanwhile, with the proverbial rapidity of evil tidings, news had travelled up from Delhi, which left no doubt of the total defeat of the English, the Proclamation of the Padishah, and the concentration of the rebel troops, who, it was believed, would soon return to Meerut with all the immense resources of the great magazine at their command. And presently fugitives came in with the sad details of mutiny and massacre, and exciting narratives of their own providential escapes.‡ All this increased the

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* Take the following illustration from the Official Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams: "Ramdyal, a prisoner confined in the Civil Gaol under a decree for arrears of rent, hastened to his village, Bhojpoor, during the night of the 10th, and the next day at daybreak collected a party and attacked a money-lender, who had a decree against him, and murdered him and six of his household."

† See description of the state of Meerut after the outbreak given by Major G. W. Williams in his "Narrative of Events:" "I found the whole of the station south of the Nullah and Begum's Bridge abandoned, for here the storm that was to shake India to its basis first broke out, and the ravages there visible were, strange to say, not accomplished by bands of soldiery formidable from their arms and discipline, but by mobs of wretched rabble (hundred of whom would have been instantaneously scattered by a few rounds of grape), and this in the face of an overwhelming European force. The General of Division, with several officers, inhabited one of the Horse Artillery barracks, whilst most of the residents occupied the Field Magazine, now universally known as the far-famed Dum-Dumma, an enclosed space of about two hundred yards square, with walls eight feet high, a ditch and four bastions at each corner. Thus strengthened, it was defensible against any number of rabble insurgents unprovided with heavy guns or mortars. So completely were the rest of the cantonments deserted, that many Natives believed that every European had been exterminated, and their power being unseen, unfelt, was readily supposed to have been subverted."

‡ Among those who escaped from Delhi, but perished on the way, was the gallant leader of the little party that defended the great Delhi Magazine. It is stated that Willoughby was murdered, with several companions, by the inhabitants of a village near the Hindun river.

1857. May. general consternation. It was plain now that there was wide-spread revolt. All civil authority was practically suspended; so Martial Law was proclaimed in the joint names of General Hewitt and Mr. Greathed; and the first who tasted the ready justice of the improvised gallows was the butcher from the bazaar, who had brutally murdered Mrs. Chambers in her house. But this seems to have been an isolated act of vigour, due rather to the energy of an individual than to the joint authority from which the edict had proceeded.*

The Sappers and Miners.

On the 16th an incident occurred which increased the general consternation. Sixty miles from Meerut, on the banks of the Jumna, lies Roorkhee, the Head-Quarters of the Engineering science of the country. There the great Thomason College, with its famous workshops, was in all the bustle and animation of its varied mechanical industry. There was the centre of the Irrigation Department, whence issued the directing authority that controlled the great system of Canal Works which watered the thirsty land. There, too, was posted the regiment of Sappers and Miners—trained and educated native military Engineers under European officers. It was a great thriving bee-hive; and that month of May found the workers in all their wonted peaceful activity, with plans and projects suited to the atmosphere of quiet times, and no thought of coming danger to disturb the even tenor of daily life. "No community in the world," wrote one, who may be said to have been the chief of this prosperous colony, "could have been living in greater security of life and property," when

Baird Smith.

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* *Ante*, page 73.

1857. May.

Major Fraser, who commanded the Sappers and Miners, received an express from the General at Meerut, ordering him to proceed by forced marches to that station, as the Sepoy regiments were in open revolt. When intelligence of this summons reached Colonel Baird Smith, he at once suggested that the regiment should be despatched by the route of the *Ganges Canal*. To this Fraser readily agreed; and within six hours boats were prepared sufficient for the conveyance of a thousand men. The regiment mustered only seven hundred and thirteen, who were equipped and ready for the journey, when another express came ordering two companies to stand fast at Roorkhee, for the protection of that place. So eventually some five hundred men set out, under Fraser, for Meerut.

The Defence of Roorkhee

Then came to Roorkhee the news of the Delhi massacre. And as the Sappers were moving down to Meerut, Baird Smith was making admirable arrangements for the defence of the great engineering depôt, in which he took such earnest and loving interest. Officially, he was Superintendent-General of Irrigation in the North-Western Provinces; a most useful functionary, great in all the arts of peace, and with a reputation which any man might be proud to possess. But the man of much science now grew at once into the man of war, and Roorkhee became a garrison under his command. Not an hour was lost.*

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* "It was at daybreak that I received the first intimation of the Meerut mutiny and massacre. When I went to the porch of my house to mount my horse for a morning ride, I found Medlicott, our geological professor, sitting there, looking oppressed with some painful intelligence, and, on my asking what the matter was, he then told me that about an hour before, Fraser, the Commandant of the Sappers and Miners, had received an express from the General at Meerut, ordering him to proceed by forced marches to that place. I immediately suggested the Ganges Canal route instead of forced marches, which would have fatigued the men much, and made them unfit for service."—*MS. Correspondence of Col. Baird Smith.*

1857. May. Those indeed were times when to lose an hour might be to lose everything; and Baird Smith knew that there was no emergency against which he might not be called upon to provide. Even the companies of Sappers, which had been left for the defence of Roorkhee, might soon become a source of infinite danger. It was soon settled that the workshops should become the citadel, to which women and children might be removed; and there, on the 16th of May, all these helpless ones, little less than a hundred* in number, were comfortably accommodated in the several rooms, whilst to each of our male people some fitting duty was assigned. Their number was not much greater than that of the women and children; and half of them were non-combatants, clerks attached to the establishment, and little accustomed to the use of arms. The trained soldiers were but about fifty† in number, with eight or ten good officers; and of these Baird Smith took the command, telling them off into different guards, and organising different departments, so that nothing was omitted or neglected that could add to the defence of the place.

The Sapper companies, suspected of disloyalty from the first, were placed under their officers in charge of the College buildings. Baird Smith had talked to some of their leading men, endeavouring to allay the obvious excitement among them by friendly explanations and assurances; and after that, he said, "I could do no more." The wretched story of the bone-dust flour was rife amongst them, and there was a vague fear, as in other places, of a meditated attack by the British, taking them by surprise, disarming, and then destroying them. In such a state of feeling every circumstance of an exceptional character is misinterpreted into an indication of offence, and when it was known to the Sappers at Roorkhee that the Sirmoor Battalion—a regiment of Goorkahs commanded by Major Charles Reid—was coming down from Dhera, on its way to Meerut,* a terrible suspicion took possession of them; they believed it was a hostile movement against themselves. When this became known to Baird Smith, he sent an express to Reid requesting him not to march upon Roorkhee, but to make straight for the Canal, and at once to embark in the boats that were waiting for him. Reid grasped the position at once, and acted upon the suggestion. Pretending that he had missed his way, he asked for a guide to lead him straight to the banks of the Canal, and so they marched on to the boats without increasing the general alarm. And, said Reid, Baird Smith "was right beyond doubt, and his good judgment and forethought may have been—indeed, I feel pretty sure was—the means of saving the place and the lives of the ladies and children."†

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* There were on the 28th of May fifty women and forty-three children, according to the Disposition List of the Roorkhee Garrison of that day.

† Baird Smith, in a letter dated May 30th, says that the trained soldiers were only about thirty, but the numbers given in the text is on the authority of the nominal roll of the garrison.

Mutiny of th Sappers.

Meanwhile, the main body of the Sappers, under

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* Immediately on receiving intelligence of the state of affairs at Meerut, Baird Smith had written to Major Reid, warning him that his services would most probably be required at that place, and offering to provide boats for the regiment. A day or two afterwards the summons came from Head-Quarters.

† Major Reid has recorded that whilst he was embarking his Goorkahs—"almond-eyed Tartars," as Baird Smith described them—several men of the Sappers came from Meerut and entered into communication with them. "I took no notice at first," he adds, "but as soon as they moved on, I called up a couple of my men and asked them what the Sappers had said to them. One little fellow replied, 'They wanted to know if we were going over to Meerut to eat the ottah (flour) sent up especially for the Goorkahs by the Governor-General; that the ottah at Meerut was nothing but ground bullocks' bones.' 'And what was your reply?' I asked. 'I said,' was the answer, 'the regiment was going wherever it was ordered—we obey the bugle-call.'"

1857. May 15. Major Fraser, had marched into Meerut. Not without some feelings of suspicion and alarm, they had moved down the great Canal; but their behaviour had, on the whole, been orderly, and when, on the 15th, they arrived at their destination, there was no reason to doubt their fidelity. Brought, however, into the immediate presence of a large body of European troops, who had the blood of their slaughtered countrymen to avenge, they were in that excitable, inflammable state, which needs only a single spark to draw forth the latent fire. It soon fell. It seems that the Commandant had promised them that they should retain charge of their own ammunition. He had no intention of breaking faith with them; but he desired that, for greater security, it should be stored in a bomb-proof building, which had been placed at his disposal. If the object of this had been carefully explained to the men, they would probably have assented without a murmur. But when, on the day after their arrival, the ammunition was being conveyed to its destination, the Sepoys suspected treachery, resented the removal of the magazine, stopped the laden carts, and broke into open mutiny. An Afghan Sepoy fired his piece from behind the Commandant, and Fraser fell, shot through the back. Others fired at Adjutant Mansell, but missed him; and the Native non-commissioned officer who was in attendance on Fraser was killed in the affray. Having done this, the mutineers broke and fled, but their victory was but short-lived. A troop of the Carabineers and some Horse-Artillery guns were let loose upon them. The greater number escaped; but some fifty of the fugitives were overtaken outside cantonments among the sand-hills, and were killed. And so the Sappers and Miners, as a regiment, ceased to exist. Two companies, however, which were at work in another part of Meerut, were disarmed, and set to work on the fortification of the Dum-Dumma.

1857. May 15—24.

Inactivity at Meerut.

After this, there was, for a time, a lull at Meerut. The destruction of the Sappers was, perhaps, regarded as a cause of congratulation and a source of confidence, and as the advancing month brought with it no new alarms, and it seemed that the mutineers were resolved to concentrate their strength at Delhi, and not to emerge thence—as people whose fighting powers were greater behind walls—things began gradually to assume a cheerful complexion, and the inmates of the Artillery School ceased to tremble as they talked of what was to come. But there was vexation in high places. The telegraph line between Meerut and Agra was sometimes, if not always open; and Lieutenant-Governor Colvin, who never could lose sight of the fact that there were a battalion of English Rifles, a regiment of English Dragoons, and two batteries of English Artillery at Meerut, was constantly urging them, for God's sake, to do something. Thinking, after a while, that it was quite useless to exhort General Hewitt to put forth any activity in such a case, Colvin addressed himself to Brigadier Wilson, thus virtually setting aside the General of Division. Nettled by this, Hewitt telegraphed to Agra respectfully to request that the Lieutenant-Governor would transmit through him orders to his subordinates when such a step could cause no delay. But the Lieutenant-Governor still continued to telegraph to the Brigadier, beseeching him to go out in force so as to keep open the main road and to prevent dangerous combinations of revolted troops throughout the Doab. "What plan," he had asked, "does

1857. May 15—24. Brigadier Wilson propose for making the Meerut force actively useful in checking an advance down the Doab? If the mutineers leave Delhi in force, it is plain that no wing of a corps, or even a single corps could stay their march. Therefore a move in strength to Bolundshuhur seems to be the right one." And now the Agra authorities continued to urge these movements, but were met by protests that it would be inexpedient to divide the force. "The only plan," said Wilson, "is to concentrate our European force, and to attack Delhi. He had consulted," he said, "with all the European officers in the force, and they were unanimously of opinion that any movement of the force from Meerut would be highly imprudent without the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, as it might counteract any movement that he might be forming." "To move in full strength," he added, "would involve the abandonment of all the sick, women and children and [ ]." Then came the inevitable story that "the Commissariat report that they cannot supply carriage for a force of half the strength;" and yet it was, numerically, but a small force that would have taken the field.* So Colvin yielded the point, and no longer looked to Meerut for assistance

It has been shown that, as one result of the inactivity of this beautiful force of all arms, a belief gained ground in the adjacent country that the English at Meerut had all been killed to a man. Although the surrounding villages were swarming with robber-clans, who had murdered our people and sacked our

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* In this telegraphic message it is stated that the force consisted of—Rifles, 700; Carabineers, mounted, 380; dismounted, 100; Artillery recruits, undrilled, 364. As some portion of the efficient, and all the inefficient men would have been left in Meerut, the number for field-service would not have exceeded 1000.

1857. May 24. Death of Mr. Johnston.

houses, it was not until the 24th of May, two weeks after the great tragedy, that a small party of our Dragoons was sent out to chastise the inmates of one of these nests of plunderers. On that day, for the first time, the English magistrate, Mr. Johnston, obtained the assistance of troops to enable him to suppress the overflowing crime of the district. The village of Ikteeapore was then burnt, and the people learnt that English soldiers were still alive in Meerut. But the demonstration was an ill-fated one. For Johnston, who had gone out with the troops, riding homewards in hot haste, when the work was done, eager to be again actively employed, was fearfully injured by the falling of his horse, and three days afterwards expired.

William Hodson.

But the Meerut Brigade had now done with inaction. The "orders of the Commander-in-Chief," for which it had been waiting, had arrived.* It had been supposed for some time that the road between Kurnaul and Meerut was closed; but in the camp of the Commander-in-Chief there was an officer, equal to any difficult work, who volunteered to carry despatches to the latter place, and to bring back the much-needed information of the state of Wilson's Brigade. This was Lieutenant William Hodson, a man of rare energy of character, who was then serving with the First (Company's) Fusiliers. He had been, years before, one of that little band of pioneers who, under Henry Lawrence, had cleared the way for the civilisation of the Punjab, and he had afterwards risen to the command of that famous Guide Corps, the institution of which had been one

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* See *ante*, p. 158.

1857. May. of the most cherished and the most successful projects of his accomplished chief. But, amidst a career of the brightest promise, a heavy cloud had gathered over him, and he had rejoined his old regiment as a subaltern, chafing under a sense of wrong, and eager to clear himself from what he declared to be unmerited imputations upon his character.* This gloom was upon him when General Anson, discerning his many fine qualities, offered him a place in the Department of the Quartermaster-General, and especially charged him with the intelligence branch of its duties, in prosecution of which he was to raise a body of a hundred horse and fifty foot.† This was at Umballah, to which place he had marched down with his regiment from Dugshai. He was soon actively at work. He hastened down to Kurnaul, and there picking up some horsemen of the Jheend Rajah's Contingent, rode into Meerut, a distance of seventy-six miles, delivered his despatches, took a bath, a breakfast, and a little sleep, and then rode back with papers for the Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, the bulk of the Meerut brigade was in the bustle of preparation for an advance, under Wilson, to join the column which was moving down from the hills to the attack of Delhi. Many then, who had chafed under the restraints of the past fortnight, took fresh heart, and panted with the excitement of coming action. In high spirits, the troops marched out of cantonments on the night of the 27th of May. The column consisted of two squadrons of the Carabineers; a wing of the Sixtieth Rifles; Scott's light field-battery; Tombs's troop of Horse Artillery; two eighteen-pounder guns, all manned by Europeans; with some Native Sappers and Irregular Horse. Brigadier Archdale Wilson commanded the force, and Mr. Hervey Greathed accompanied it as civil officer. And with them rode, at the head of an improvised body of Horse, Jan Fishan Khan, the Afghan chief, who, unlike most of his countrymen, thought that he was bound to do something in return for the British pension, which supported him and his house.* 1857. May 27.

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* It would not consort with the nature of this work to enter into an elaborate inquiry into the justice or injustice of the treatment to which Lieutenant Hodson was subjected by Lord Dalhousie's Government. It is right, however, to state that some misapprehension appears to prevail as to the alleged offence on account of which the Commandant of the Guides, who was also a Deputy Commissioner in the Peshawur district, was remanded to his regiment. He was not removed from the command of the Guides in consequence of any irregularity in his accounts, but he was removed altogether from the Punjab on account of his treatment of an influential Eusofzye chief. It was the Court of Directors that decreed him to be unfit to hold any office of trust. And I must protest strongly against the charges brought by Lieutenant Hodson's fraternal biographer against certain high Punjabee officials, including Sir Herbert Edwardes, who has gone to his rest whilst this volume has been growing under my pen. It is impossible to believe that such men were influenced by feelings of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Indeed, Mr. Hodson in no small measure furnishes his own refutation of such charges, when he says in one sentence that his brother was disliked because he was a protégé of Sir Henry Lawrence, and in another that Sir Herbert Edwardes was his chief opponent. Edwardes was the last man in India to be prejudiced against a favourite of Henry Lawrence.—*See a further note in the Appendix.*

† This order was subsequently extended to the raising of "an entire new Regiment of Irregular Horse."

The marches of the two first days were uneventful. No enemy appeared, and Greathed believed that the rebel force would not attempt to give us battle except before the walls of Delhi. But when, on the 30th of May, Wilson's force reached Ghazee-ood-deen Nuggur,† near the river Hindun, there were May 30. The battles on the Hindun.

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* The feeling generally, at this time, and in some instances the conduct, of the Afghan pensioners, of whom there was quite a colony in Loodhianah, denoted the ingratitude of the race. See Mr. Ricketts's interesting Loodhianah report, "Papers relating to the Mutiny in the Punjab, 1857."

† The position is thus described by Baird Smith in the unpublished fragment of history, to which I have above referred: "This town, of respectable size, and with some ancient traces of walls, stands on the left bank of the Hindun, about a mile from that river. A long causeway carries the grand trunk road across the broad valley, within which the stream, shrunk during the scorching

1857. May 30. signs of a coming struggle. Flushed with success, and confident in their strength, the mutineers had left their stronghold, and had come on to give battle to the Meerut Brigade before its junction with the force from Umballah. They had planted some heavy guns on a ridge to the right of their position, and from this point they opened fire upon our people. Then the eighteen-pounders, under Light, and Scott's field battery, made vigorous answer, and under their cover the British riflemen advanced, and moving along the causeway, came to close quarters with the enemy. For some time a stubborn conflict was maintained; but our Horse Artillery, under Henry Tombs, supported by the Carabineers, dashed to the right, crossed the Hindun, making light of its rugged bank and dangerous bed, and successfully turned the left flank of the enemy. Under the galling fire then poured in upon them the mutineers reeled and staggered, and presently broke. Some took refuge in a village, whence they were driven by our Riflemen, and soon the whole body of the enemy were in ignominious flight towards the walls of Delhi. Five of their guns fell into our hands, and they left many of their fighting men behind them. Our own loss would have been small, but for the explosion of an ammunition-waggon; not by an accident of warfare, but by an act of resolute and sacrificial courage on the part of one of the mutineers. A Sepoy of the Eleventh Regiment deliberately discharged his musket into the

heats of May to a mere rivulet, wanders in a channel of extreme tortuosity, fordable both by infantry and artillery, though, from the prevalence of quicksands, the process is not altogether free from risk of mishap. A suspension bridge spans the stream, and on the right bank the causeway is covered by a toll-house, capable, if need were, of some defence. Villages, furnishing considerable means of resistance in their mud-walled houses and narrow lanes, are scattered at intervals along the road, and the ground in ridges of sensible magnitude on both banks, but especially on the right."

midst of the combustibles just as a party of the Rifles, 1857.
under Captain Andrews, were gallantly seizing the May 30.
gun to which the cart belonged. The explosion cost the man his life; but Andrews and some of his followers were killed by it, and others were carried wounded from the scene.* It taught us that among the mutineers were some brave and desperate men, who were ready to court instant death for the sake of the national cause. Many acts of heroism of this kind brighten up the history of the war, and many more were, doubtless, performed, of which History has no record.

The mutineers fled in hot haste to Delhi, where May 31.
they were reviled for their disgraceful failure, and sent back reinforced, to try whether Fortune would help them on another day. Stimulated by promises of large rewards to achieve a great success in honour of the restored monarchy, they again marched to the Hindun. That day was our Whit-Sunday. There was no Church parade. But the morning was ushered in by the most solemn and beautiful of all our Church services—that of the Burial of the Dead. There was genuine sorrow for those who had fallen as they were laid in unconsecrated ground, "a babool tree and a milestone marking the spot."† Little space was then left for mournful reflections. It was soon known that the Sepoys were returning to the attack. About noon our bugles sounded the alarm. The enemy had taken up a position on the ridge to the right of the Hindun, about a mile from our advanced

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* "The officers that night drank in solemn silence to the memory of the brave departed; and from the manner in which the toast was proposed by Dr. Innes, the surgeon of the regiment, and received by every officer and member of the mess, I am sure, from his gallantry and other estimable qualities, that the memory of poor Andrews will be long and fondly cherished by them." — *The Chaplain's* (*Mr. Rotton's*) *Narrative.*

† Chaplain's Narrative.

1857. May 31. posts on the bridge. Pushing forward his guns, he opened a heavy fire upon Wilson's force. This was a signal for our advance. The Artillery were sent forward to reply to the enemy's fire—the Rifles, with two of Scott's guns, occupying the head of the bridge. The battle, which then raged for some two hours, was almost wholly an Artillery fight.* But Cavalry and Infantry were exposed both to the fire of the enemy, and to the more irresistible assaults of the sun. It was the last day of May, one of the hottest days of the year. The fiery blasts of the summer were aggravated by the heat thrown from the smouldering embers of the burnt villages. The thirst of our people was intolerable. Some were smitten down by sun-stroke; others fell exhausted by the way; and there is a suspicion that some were destroyed by water poisoned by the enemy.† But, in spite of all these depressing circumstances, Wilson's troops drove the enemy from their position. When the fire of the mutineers had somewhat slackened, the Brigadier ordered a general advance of his force, and the Sepoys recoiled before it. But although they felt that they could not hold their ground and continue the battle, they did not fly, shattered and broken, as on the preceding day. Having discharged into our advancing columns a tremendous shower of grape-shot, they limbered up their guns before the smoke had dispersed, and fell back in orderly array. Exhausted by the cruel heat and suffering agonies of thirst, the English soldier could not improve his victory by giving chase to the retiring enemy. The mutineers carried off all their guns and stores, and made good their retreat to Delhi. But they had been thus twice beaten in fair fight by inferior numbers, and had nothing but their disgrace to carry back with them and to lay at the feet of their King. 1857. May 31.

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* "The conduct of Tombs's troop yesterday was the admiration of every one; for a long time they were engaged on two sides with the enemy's artillery. Light then got his two eighteen-pounders down to the river-bank and drew off the fire upon himself, and paid it back with interest."—*Hervey Greathed's Letters.* Lieutenant Perkins, of the Horse Artillery, was killed by a shot from one of the enemy's guns.

† This is stated by Mr. Rotton, who says: "Some were sun-stricken, some slain, and a few, whose cruel thirst induced them to slake it with water provided by the enemy in vessels containing strong corrosive poison, were thus deprived of life."

In the English camp there was great rejoicing; and, as the news spread, all men were gladdened by the thought that the tide now seemed to have turned, and that retribution, which, though delayed, was certain, was now overtaking the enemies of our race and the murderers of our people. The old stern courage had been again asserted, and with the old results. Success had returned to our ranks; and there was special cause for congratulation in the fact that Wilson, with a portion only of the old Meerut Brigade, had been the first to inflict punishment on the rebels, and among them upon some of the very men who had prevailed against us so grievously a little time before. But the situation of the little force on the Hindun was not without its perils. It was doubtful whether our troops, exhausted as they were by the work that they had done under that fiery sky, could successfully sustain another attack, if, as was probable, the enemy should come out again from Delhi, and in increased numbers. But the month of June came in, bringing with it no fresh assaults, but a welcome reinforcement. The Goorkah regiment, nearly five hundred strong, having moved down from Bolundshuhur, marched into Camp, under its gallant Commandant, Major Charles Reid. At first they were taken for a body of the enemy marching upon our rear. But no sooner were they identified than the June 1.

1857. June. British troops turned out and welcomed them with lusty cheers.*

Movements of Barnard's force. Meanwhile the Delhi Field Force, under Barnard, had marched down to Alipore, which lies at a distance of twelve miles from Delhi. It arrived there on the 5th of June, and was halted until the Meerut troops could come up from the Hindun. There had been some want of understanding between the commanders of the two forces as to the nature of the operations and the point of junction. It had been thought, at one time, that it would be strategically expedient to move upon Delhi from both banks of the Jumna; and after the battles of the Hindun, Wilson's force had halted for orders from the chief. Those orders were received on the 4th of June. That evening Wilson commenced his march, and soon after midnight on the morning of the 6th he crossed the Jumna at Baghput. The delay was a source of bitterness to the Umballah troops, who were furiously eager to fall upon the enemy. Fresh tidings of mutiny and murder had reached them, and the blood of officers and men alike was at fever heat. The impatience, however, was but short-lived. Wilson was now close at hand. And already the waiting was bearing good fruit. On the 6th the Siege-train arrived. June 6.

Arrival of Siege-train. Orders for the equipment of the Train had been received on the 17th of May. On the morning of the 24th, the gates of the Fort were opened. The guns and waggons and the labouring bullocks were all ready. The Sepoys of the Third Regiment at Phillour had volunteered to escort the Train;[*] and, with some troopers of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, they now marched upon the Sutlej. The bridge was still passable, and the Train crossed over. Two hours afterwards the boats, which spanned the river, had been swept away by the flooding waters. But, although the Sepoys of the Third Regiment, who had then the game in their hands, had suffered the Train to cross the bridge, it was known that they were mutinous to the core.[†] So when the whole line of Ordnance was secure on the other bank of the river, it was quietly explained to the Sepoys of the Third that their services were no longer needed. A Contingent of Horse and Foot had been furnished by the Rajah of Nabha, and it was now ready to relieve the men of the suspected regiments. Under this guard of auxiliaries, with which the detachment of Irregular Cavalry moved forward, the Train laboured on to Umballah, which it reached on the 27th of May. But a new difficulty awaited it there; for, although the guns had arrived, they were useless for want of gunners. A weak company was, therefore, despatched from Ferozpore by bullock-train, to be afterwards strengthened by recruits from Meerut. Meanwhile, the position of the train was not without its surrounding dangers. The Nusseree battalion, which had been guilty of such shameful defection in the

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* "The whole force turned out and cheered the regiment into Camp; but my poor little fellows were so dead beat they could not return the hearty cheers with which they were welcomed. 'Get something to eat sharp,' said the Brigadier, 'as we may have to turn out.' Exhausted as my men were, I certainly was not anxious for a fight, and was thankful the mutineers left us alone that day."—*Unpublished Memoir by Major C. Reid.*

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[*] The train consisted of eight eighteen-pounders, four eight-inch howitzers, twelve five-and-a-half-inch mortars, and four eight-inch mortars. (*Norman*). The officer in command of the train was Lieutenant Griffith. Major Kaye commanded the whole detachment.

[†] This is an instance of what has been called the "inexplicable inconsistency" of the Sepoys, who so often allowed their best opportunities to escape; but Mr. Ricketts sufficiently affords a clue to it when, in his interesting Loodhianah Report, he says that they were pledged in concert with others to a certain course of procedure, and that no temptation of immediate advantage could induce them to diverge from the programme. The later history of this corps will be found in Book VI.

1857. June.

hour of our need, had come into Umballah, and the Sepoys of the Fifth were striving to induce the Goorkahs to combine with them to seize the guns and to march to Delhi.* The plot, however, was frustrated, and the Siege-train passed on safely to Head-Quarters.†

June 7. Junction with the Meerut Force.

On the 7th of June, amidst hearty welcomings and warm congratulations, the Meerut contingent marched gaily into Alipore. At one o'clock on the following morning they commenced the march on Delhi, thirsting for the battle. Their scouts had told them that the enemy were strongly posted in front of the approaches to the city, resolute to contest the progress of the British Force. Never since the first English soldier loaded his piece or unsheathed his sword to smite the dark-faced, white-turbanded Moor or Gentoo—not even when Clive's army, a century before, landed in Bengal to inflict retribution on the perpetrators of the great crime of the Black Hole—had our people moved forward under the impulse of such an eager, burning desire to be amongst the murderers of their race, as on that early June morning, when Barnard's fighting men knew that the mutineers of Meerut and Delhi were within their reach. It had been ascertained that the enemy were strongly posted, Infantry and Cavalry, with thirty guns, about six miles from Delhi, at a place called Budlee-ka-Serai, where groups of old houses and walled gardens, once the country residences of some of the nobles of the Imperial Court, supplied positions capable of powerful resistance.‡ On this place marched Barnard, on the early morning of the 8th of June, along the

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* The Fifth was afterwards disarmed in the presence of two Companies of the Fusiliers.

† On a requisition from Major Kaye a detachment of Fusiliers was sent to join the escort. The artillery-men from Ferozpore joined at Kurnaul.

‡ Baird Smith.

Grand Trunk Road, with the river on one side and the Western Jumna Canal on the other, whilst Brigadier Hope Grant, with Cavalry and Horse Artillery, crossed the canal and moved down along its right bank with the object of taking the enemy in flank. 1857. June.

Day was just dawning when Barnard's columns came within fire of the Sepoys' guns. The dispositions which he had made for the attack were excellent, and they were not frustrated by any discovery of a mistaken estimate of the enemy's movements. He found the rebels where he expected to find them. Whilst Showers, with the First Brigade, was to attack upon the right, Graves, with the Second, was to lead his men against the enemy's position on the left; and Grant, on the first sound of the guns, was to re-cross the canal by the bridge in the rear of the rebel-camp, and to take them in flank. The strength of the enemy was known to be in their Artillery. Four heavy guns, Money's Horse Artillery troop, and part of Scott's Battery, were sent in advance to silence their fire, but the guns of the mutineers were of heavier metal than our own, and it was not easy to make an impression on their batteries. For some time the Artillery had the fighting to themselves.* Officers and men were dropping at their guns, and for a little space it seemed doubtful whether they could hold their own. But the British Infantry now deployed into line; and the inspiring mandate to charge the guns went forth to the Seventy-Fifth. Then Herbert led out his noble regiment, with a ringing cheer, right up to the enemy's batteries, and the June 8. Battle of Budlee-ka-Serai.

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* "Light, Kaye, and Fagan, with four heavy guns, bore the brunt for some time, until the brigade of infantry came up and got into line."—*Hervey Greathed's Letters.*—Major Kaye was in command.

1857. June 8. Second Europeans followed in support. Nothing could resist the impetuous rush of these English soldiers; but the rebels stood well to their guns, and showed that there were some resolute spirits beneath those dusky skins, and that the lessons they had learnt in our camps and cantonments had not been thrown away. Many fought with the courage of desperation, and stood to be bayoneted at their guns. It was not a time for mercy; if it was sought, it was sternly refused.

Meanwhile the Second Brigade, under Graves, charged the enemy's position on the left, and, about the same time, Hope Grant, whose march had been delayed by the state of the roads along which he had advanced, appeared in the enemy's rear with his Cavalry and Horse Artillery. Thus the programme of the preceding day was acted out in all its parts, and the enemy, attacked on every side, had nothing left to them but retreat. At first, they seem to have fallen back in orderly array; but the Lancers, under Yule, fell upon them so fiercely, and the Horse Artillery guns, though impeded by the water-courses, opened so destructive a fire upon them, that they were soon in panic flight, shattered and hopeless. All the guns, and stores, and baggage which they had brought out from the great city were abandoned; and so our first fight before Delhi ended in an assuring victory.

But the day's work was not done. Barnard saw clearly that it was a great thing to make an impression on the enemy, not easily to be effaced, on the first day of the appearance of the Army of Retribution before the walls of Delhi. The sun had risen, and the fury of the June heats was at its height. Our men had marched through the night, they had fought

1857. June 8.

a battle, they were worn and weary, and now the fierce sun was upon them, and there had been but little time to snatch any sustaining food, or to abate the thirst of the Indian summer; but the strong spirit within them overbore the weakness of the flesh, and there was no demand to be made upon them by their leader to which they were not prepared to respond. Barnard's soldierly experiences had taught him that even a force so broken as the advance of the enemy at Budlee-ka-Serai, might rally, and that they might have a strong reserve. He determined, therefore, to push onward, and not to slacken until he had swept the enemy back into Delhi, and had secured such a position for his force as would be an advantageous base for future operations. From Budlee-ka-Serai the road diverges into two branches, the one a continuation of the Grand Trunk leading to the suburb of Subzee-mundee, and the other leading to the old British Cantonments. Stretching in front of these two positions, and forming, as it were, the base of a triangle, of which the two roads were the sides, was a long rocky ridge overlooking the city. At the point of divergence, Barnard separated his force, and sending Wilson with one division along the former road, led the other himself down to the Ridge. There he found the enemy posted in some strength with heavy guns; but another dexterous flank movement turned their position, and, before they could change their line, the Sixtieth Rifles, the Second Europeans, and Money's Troop were sweeping along the Ridge; and soon Wilson, who had fought his way through the Subzee-mundee, and driven the enemy from their shelter there, appeared at the other end, and the rebels saw that all was lost. There was nothing left for them now but to seek safety behind the walls of

1857 June 8. the city. From those walls their comrades, looking out towards the scene of action, could see the smoke and flame which pronounced that the Sepoys' Lines, in our old cantonments, were on fire. That day's fighting had deprived them of their shelter outside the walls, and given us the finest possible base for the conduct of our future operations against the city.*

Results of the Battle. So the victory of the 8th of June was complete, and it remained for us only to count what we had gained and what we had lost by that morning's fighting. The loss of the enemy is computed at three hundred and fifty men; and they had left in our hands twenty-six guns, with some serviceable ammunition, which we much wanted.† Our own loss was small, considering the dashing character of the work that had been done. Four officers and forty-seven men were killed in the encounters of that day, and a hundred and thirty-four men were wounded or missing. Among those who received their death-wounds at Budlee-ka-Serai was the chief of Sir Henry Barnard's Staff. Colonel Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, was shot down, almost at the commencement of the action. As he lay there, in agony, with young Barnard, the General's son and aide-de-camp, vainly endeavouring to help him, he asked the young officer to raise his head, so that he might see the wound that was rending him; and, having seen it, he knew that he was dying. Telling Barnard that nothing could be done for him, he begged his young friend to leave him to his fate. Then presently the spirit passed away from his body: and, at sunset, all that was left of the Adjutant-General of the Army was laid in the grave. To the Commander of the Delhi Force this must have been a heavy loss, for Chester possessed all the knowledge and experience which Barnard lacked; and the Adjutant-General was a brave soldier and a man of sound judgment, and his advice, in any difficult conjuncture, would have been wisely received with respect.* But Chester had risen in the Department, and the time was coming when departmental experience and traditionary knowledge were to be stripped of their splendid vestments. And History, without any injurious reflection upon his character, may declare that the incident was not all evil that

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* In these first operations, as in all others, as will subsequently appear, the Sirmoor battalion did excellent service. Major Reid thus describes their conduct on the 8th: "About one o'clock P.M. we reached the Ridge, when I was directed by General Barnard to occupy Hindoo Rao's House, which is within twelve hundred yards of the Moree Bastion. Had just made ourselves comfortable, when the alarm was sounded. In ten minutes the mutineers were seen coming up towards Hindoo Rao's house in force. I went out with my own regiment and two companies of Rifles, and drove them back into the city. This, however, was not accomplished till five P.M., so that we were under arms for sixteen hours. Heat fearful. My little fellows behaved splendidly, and were cheered by every European regiment. It was the only Native regiment with the force, and I may say every eye was upon it. The general was anxious to see what the Goorkahs could do, and if we were to be trusted. They had (because it was a Native regiment) doubts about us; but I think they are now satisfied." It is true, as stated, that the Sirmoor battalion was the only Native regiment engaged on our side; but there were other Native detachments. The Sappers from Meerut fought well, and were commended in Sir H. Barnard's despatch, as was also the Contingent of the Jheend Rajah. And Jan Fishan Khan, with his horsemen, did gallant service. Flushed with the excitement of the battle, the Afghan chief is said to have declared that another such day would make him a Christian.

† The statement in the text is given on the authority of Sir H. Barnard's official despatch. But the number of guns captured on the 8th of June is set down at *thirteen* in Major Norman's narrative, Major Reid's Extracts from Letters and Notes, and in the "History of the Siege of Delhi by an Officer who served there," &c. Norman has specified in detail the nature of the captured ordnance, and he is notable for his accuracy.

1857.
June 8.

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* "Among the slain was unhappily Colonel Charles Chester, Adjutant-General of the Army, a brave and experienced soldier, whose loss thus early in the campaign was a grave and lamentable misfortune; for his sound judgment and ripe knowledge would have been precious in council as in action."—*Baird Smith's Unpublished Memoir.* Two other officers of the Staff were killed, Captain C. W. Russell and Captain J. W. Delamain. The fourth officer who lost his life was Lieutenant A. Harrison of the Seventy-fifth; Colonel Herbert of that regiment was among the wounded.

May. June 8. in due course brought Neville Chamberlain and John Nicholson down to Delhi.

But it is not by lists of killed and wounded, or returns of captured ordnance, that the value of the first victory before Delhi is to be estimated. It had given us an admirable base of operations—a commanding military position—open in the rear to the lines along which thenceforth our reinforcements and supplies, and all that we looked for to aid us in the coming struggle, were to be brought. And great as was this gain to us, in a military sense, the moral effect was scarcely less; for behind this ridge lay our old cantonments, from which a month before the English had fled for their lives. On the parade-ground the Head-Quarters of Barnard's Force were now encamped, and the familiar flag of the Feringhees was again to be seen from the houses of the Imperial City.

BOOK V.—PROGRESS OF REBELLION IN UPPER INDIA.

[MAY—JULY, 1857.]

CHAPTER I.

THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES—STATE OF AFFAIRS AT BENARES—STATE OF THE CITY—THE OUTBREAK AT AZIMGURH—ARRIVAL OF GENERAL NEILL—DISARMING OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH—THE MUTINY AT JAUNPORE—AFFAIRS AT ALLAHABAD—MUTINY OF THE SIXTH—APPEARANCE OF GENERAL NEILL—THE FORT SECURED—RETRIBUTORY MEASURES.

1857. May.

IT has been seen that whilst Lord Canning was eagerly exhorting the chiefs of the Army to move with all despatch upon Delhi, never doubting that a crushing blow would soon descend upon the guilty city, he was harassed by painful thoughts of the unprotected state of the country, along the whole great line of the Ganges to Allahabad and thence through the Doab to Agra. There was one English regiment at Dinapore; there was one English regiment at Agra; and besides these the whole strength of our fighting men consisted of a handful of white artillerymen and a few invalided soldiers of the Company's European Army. And, resting upon the broad waters of the Ganges, there was the great military cantonment of Cawnpore, with a large European population, a number of Sepoy regiments, and few, if any, white troops. To all these unprotected places on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, and the more inland stations dependent upon

1857. May. them, the most anxious thoughts of the Governor-General were now turned, and his most earnest efforts directed. If the Native soldiery, who were thickly strewn along these lines, not only in all the military cantonments, but in all the chief civil stations, guardians alike of the property of our Government and the lives of our people, had risen in that month of May, nothing short of the miraculous interposition of Providence could have saved us from swift destruction.

But in all that defenceless tract of country over which the apprehensions of the Governor-General were then ranging, and towards which he was then eagerly sending up reinforcements, rebellion was for a time in a state of suspension. Whether it was that a day had been fixed for a simultaneous rising of all the Sepoy regiments, or whether, without any such concerted arrangements, they were waiting to see what the English would do to avenge their brethren slaughtered at Meerut and Delhi, the Native soldiery at the stations below those places suffered day after day to pass without striking a blow. No tidings of fresh disaster from the great towns, or from the military cantonments dotting the Gangetic provinces, followed closely upon the news of the capture of the imperial city. But everywhere the excitement was spreading, alike in the Lines and the Bazaars, and it was plain that many weeks would not elapse without a fresh development of trouble, more dreadful, perhaps, than the first growth, of which he already had before him the record.

Benares. A little more than four hundred miles from Calcutta, in the direction of the north-west, lies the city of Benares. Situated on a steep sloping bank of the Ganges, which its buildings overhang, it is the most picturesque of the river-cities of Hindostan. Its countless temples, now beautiful and now grotesque, with the elaborate devices of sculptors of different ages and different schools; its spacious mosques with their tall minarets grand against the sky;* the richly carved balconies of its houses; its swarming marts and market-places, wealthy with the produce of many countries and the glories of its own looms; its noble ghauts, or flights of landing-stairs leading from the great thoroughfares to the river-brink, and ever crowded with bathers and drawers of the sacred water; the many-shaped vessels moored against the river-banks, and the stately stream flowing on for ever between them, render this great Hindu city, even as seen by the fleshly eye, a spectacle of unsurpassed interest. But the interest deepens painfully in the mind of the Christian traveller, who regards this swarming city, with all its slatternly beauty, as the favoured home of the great Brahminical superstition. It is a city given up to idolatry, with, in the estimation of millions of people, an odour of sanctity about it which draws pilgrims from all parts of India to worship at its shrines or to die at its ghauts. Modern learning might throw doubt upon the traditional antiquity of the place, but could not question the veneration in which it is held as the sacred city of the Hindoos, the cherished residence of the Pundits and the Priests. 1857. May.

But neither sacerdotal nor scholastic influences had softened the manners or tempered the feelings of the

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* A recent writer states that it is computed that there are fourteen hundred and fifty-four temples and two hundred and seventy-two mosques in the city of Benares.—*See Sherring's "Sacred City of the Hindus."*

1857. May. people of Benares.* There had always been something more than the average amount of discontent and disaffection among the citizens; and now in the summer of 1857 this was increased by the high price of provisions—always believed to be one of the curses of British rule.† And there was another source of special danger. Some of the most disreputable members of the Delhi Family had been long resident at Benares, where they had assumed all the airs of the Imperial Family, and persistently endeavoured in secret to sow resentment in the city against the English. These wretched Mogul Princes, it was not doubted, would be well disposed, in such a conjuncture, to foment rebellion among the Sepoys; and it was scarcely less probable that the State prisoners—Sikhs, Mahrattas, Mahomedans, and others, who had been made to find an asylum in Benares, would find ample means of gratifying their love of intrigue in dangerous efforts against the power that had brought them to the dust.‡

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* The population of Benares is estimated at about two hundred thousand, of which an unusually large proportion are Hindoos. The author of the "Red Pamphlet" computes the number at three hundred thousand, and Macaulay rhetorically amplifies it into "half a million." In May, 1857, Mr. Tucker, the Commissioner, writing to Lord Canning, speaks of "the huge, bigoted city of Benares, with a hundred and eighty thousand of the worst population in the country." This is probably rather under the number, but it is to be remembered that there is in Benares always an immense floating population of pilgrims from other provinces.

† "The city, always the most turbulent in India, was now the more dangerous from the severity with which the high price of corn pressed upon the poorer classes; the Poorbeah Sepoys, who had been more or less restless since the beginning of March, now publicly called on their Gods to deliver them from the Feringhees, clubbed together to send messengers westward for intelligence, and, finally, sent away their Gooroo (priest), lest, as they said, in the troubles which were coming, he should suffer any hurt."—*Report of Mr. Taylor, Officiating Joint Magistrate.*

‡ Major Charters Macpherson, who had been Governor-General's Agent at Benares, before the appointment was incorporated with the Commissionership, has thus described some of the leading features of the population of Benares: "These attenuated shadows of the regality of Delhi—these strong, noble, robust, and workman-like

1857. May.

The Secrole Cantonment.

At a distance of about three miles, inland, from the city of Benares, is the suburb of Secrole. There was the English military cantonment—there were the Courts of Law and the great Jail—the English Church and the English Cemetery—the Government College—the several Missionary Institutes—the Hospitals and Asylums—the Public Gardens, and the private residences of the European officers and their subordinates. The military force consisted of half a company of European Artillery and three Native regiments. These were the Thirty-seventh regiment of Native Infantry, the Sikh regiment of Loodhianah, and the Thirteenth regiment of Irregular Cavalry—in all, some two thousand men, watched by some thirty English gunners. The force was commanded by Brigadier George Ponsonby.* He was an officer of the Native Cavalry, who fifteen years before, in the affair of Purwan-durrah—that charge, which was no charge, and which was at once so heroic and so dastardly—had covered himself with glory. The names of Fraser and Ponsonby, who flung themselves almost alone upon the horsemen of Dost Mahomed, will live as long as that great war is remembered, and will be enshrined in the calendar of our English heroes. In spite of those fifteen years, the incident was still fresh in men's minds in India, and there was confidence in the thought that Ponsonby commanded at Benares.

There other good soldiers also were assembled;

Sikh chiefs, whom my heart takes in straight; then the shroffs, merchant-zemindars, and bankers of four hundred years' standing, and insurance companies of Benares—the very essence, pride, and heart of Gangetic commerce, or rather half-heart, Mirzapore holding the other ventricle; then, also, its Pundit-dom in full strength yet, all this has passed before me most curiously."—*Memorials of an Indian Officer.*

* In the early part of May, Ponsonby had not taken command. Colonel Gordon then commanded the station.

1857. May.

The civilians at Benares.

and civilians too, with the best courage of the soldier and more than his wonted wisdom. Mr. Henry Carr Tucker—one of a family famous alike for courage and for capacity—was Commissioner of Benares. Mr. Frederick Gubbins, who, some time before, as Magistrate, had acquired by a grand display of energy in a local crisis an immense ascendancy over the minds of the people, was now the Judge. Mr. Lind was the Magistrate of Benares. It is impossible to over-rate their exertions.* As soon as the fatal news arrived from Meerut and Delhi, they saw clearly the danger which beset them, and the work which lay before them, to preserve our old supremacy in such a place. The crisis was one which demanded that the civil and military authorities should take counsel together. Warned by the wholesale butcheries of Meerut and Delhi, they deemed it a point of essential urgency that there should be a common understanding as to the place of resort for women and children and non-combatants in the event of a sudden surprise or alarm. A council, therefore, was held; but it would seem that no definite plan of action was formed. On the following day two military officers called upon Mr. Lind, with a proposal that greatly startled him. One was Captain William Olpherts, commanding the Artillery, an officer of good repute, brave as a lion, but of uncertain temper, who had served under Williams of Kars, in the auxiliary operations connected with the Crimean War. The other was Captain Watson, of the En-

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* "The magistrate and judge (Messrs. Lind and Gubbins) exerted themselves with great skill to maintain the peace of the city; now patrolling with parties of Sowars, now persuading Bunyahs to lower the price of corn, now listening to the tales of spies, who reported clearly the state of feeling in the city, and told the minds of the Sepoys far more truly than the officers in command."—*Mr. Taylor's Report.*

1857. May.

gineers. Their opinions were entitled to be received with respect; but when they suggested the propriety of an immediate retreat to the strong fortress of Chunar (eighteen miles distant from Benares), Mr. Lind resented the proposal, and said that nothing would induce him to leave his post. When his visitors had taken their departure, the Magistrate hastened to Mr. Gubbins, and, returning to his own house with the Judge, was presently joined by Mr. Tucker and by Colonel Gordon, who temporarily commanded the station. Olpherts and Watson had intimated that Gordon had approved the plan of retreat to Chunar; but when in answer to a question, which he put to Mr. Gubbins, the civilian said, "I will go on my knees to you not to leave Benares!" Gordon promptly answered, "I am glad to hear you say so. I was persuaded against my will." Mr. Tucker had never doubted that it was their duty to stand fast.* So it was resolved that no sign of anxiety should be made manifest, either to the soldiery or to the people; that every one should remain in his own home, as in quiet times, and that there should be no open display of arming, or any other symptom of distrust. But in the event of a sudden rising either of the soldiery or of the people, all the Christian residents not

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* Mr. Taylor, however, in his official narrative, says, "They both (Lind and Gubbins) returned to Mr. Lind's house to discuss the best means of operation, and were soon joined by Mr. Tucker the Commissioner, and Colonel Gordon. When the former alluded to the plan (the retreat to Chunar) in terms which seemed to imply he approved it, Mr. Lind condemned it most strongly," &c. &c. It is possible that for "former" we should read "latter." In a letter before me (May 19), addressed to Lord Canning, Mr. Tucker says, "One officer of high rank and much experience recommended that we should make a night march, and shut ourselves up in Chunar. Colonel Gordon, commanding the station, Mr. Gubbins, the judge, and Mr. Lind, the magistrate, unanimously agreed with me that to show any open distrust in this manner would cause a panic, the bazaars would be closed, and both the troops and the city would be up against us. We, therefore, determined to face the danger without moving a muscle."

1857. May. engaged in suppressing it were to seek refuge in the Mint.

An interval of quiet. And so the daily goings on of social life fell back again into the old groove; and some even found, in the prospect before them, causes of increased hopefulness and bountiful anticipations of a pleasure-laden future. Were there not European troops coming up from Dinapore and Calcutta, and would there not be gay doings at Benares? Those whose duty it was to know what was going on in the surrounding country, heard this careless talk with something of a shudder, but wisely refrained from saying anything to dash the cheerfulness of the talkers. "My game," wrote the Commissioner to the Governor-General, "is to keep people in good spirits; so I keep my bad news to myself, and circulate all the good." Meanwhile, he and his colleagues were doing all that could be done, without noise or excitement, to restore confidence alike to the soldiery and to the townspeople. It was no small thing to supply an antidote to the famine-prices which were then ruling in the markets of the city, and this might be done, so far at least as the evil bore upon the soldiery, without interfering with the privileges of the sellers. So the Commissioner guaranteed, on the part of Government, that for every rupee paid by the Sepoys for their *ottah*, a certain number of pounds, as in ordinary times, should be given, whilst the Judge and the Magistrate went about in the city endeavouring (and with good success) to convince the chief importers of grain that it would be sound policy in the end to keep down their prices to the normal rates.* These things had a good effect; but the utter weakness of the European force in Benares stared these brave and sagacious men in the face at every turn, and they felt that, under Providence, nothing could save them until the arrival of succour, except the calmness and confidence of their demeanour in the hour of danger. "So great is my confidence," wrote the Commissioner, "that I have not a single weapon, beyond a heavy-handled riding-whip, in my possession. In dealing with a parcel of children, which Sepoys and all Natives are, moral force goes a great way." And it should be noted here, as an encouraging symptom, that about this time all the Sikh Sirdars, then prisoners at Benares, offered their services to Mr. Tucker—and it was believed in good faith—to act as a body-guard to him, and to protect his house.

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* "I guaranteed Ponsonby yesterday in issuing ottah to the troops at sixteen seers, and trust you will bear me out. It is ill talking to a hungry man. All the bazaars are open, but very naturally the grain-sellers are apprehensive, and raising their prices. Gubbins and Lind

First arrival of Reinforcements. May 24.

And the confidence thus felt—which in the breasts of some, at least, was a sustaining trust in the overflowing mercy of God—was made manifest before all the people of Benares, by a practical illustration of a remarkable kind. On the 24th of May, a detachment of forty-four men of the Eighty-fourth Queen's, who had been pushed up by the Governor-General by dawk, arrived from Chinsurah, near Calcutta. This reinforcement would have more than doubled the reliable military strength on which the security of the English at Benares was to depend. From every station along the great line of country between Delhi and Calcutta had come the despairing

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have been in the city all the morning trying to show the principal importers the good policy of keeping down prices as much as possible."—*Mr. H. C. Tucker to Lord Canning, May* 23, 1857. "Through the exertions of Mr. Gubbins, assisted by Mr. Lind, and his influence with the wealthy merchants, the price of grain in the Bazaar has fallen from twelve or thirteen seers to fifteen seers (for the rupee). This is a great triumph of confidence, and has reassured the multitude wonderfully."—*The Same to the Same, May* 26, 1857.

1857. May 24. cry, "For God's sake send us Europeans!" And now that this help had come to the first of the great undefended stations—small, it is true, in numbers, but still at such a time an immense relief and reinforcement to the little band of Christian men, who were trusting in God, and maintaining a bold front before their fellows—they bethought themselves of others who were in greater need than themselves, and suffered the welcome detachment to pass on to Cawnpore; and that too at a time when they seemed to be in their greatest peril. For news had just come that the Seventeenth Regiment, at Azimgurh, some sixty miles distant, was on the verge, if not in the full stream, of open mutiny, and the Benares regiments seemed only to be waiting for a signal from their comrades in the neighbourhood. Still they thought more of others than of themselves. Sir Henry Lawrence had written earnestly to urge upon them the great need of Cawnpore, where General Wheeler was threatened by a dangerous enemy; and so Ponsonby and Tucker, taking counsel together, determined to let the succour which had been sent to them pass on to the relief of others. "Gordon," wrote the Commissioner, "thinks that we have run too great a risk in sending on at once the parties of the Eighty-fourth, whom you sent on to us by dawk; but Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to me so urgently to send every man who could be spared, that Ponsonby and I concurred in thinking that it was our duty to run some risk here, and stretch a point for the relief of Cawnpore. Besides, we argued that nothing could show better to the suspected Thirty-seventh Regiment than that when we had got Europeans from Calcutta, and placed our guns in safety, we did not care to detain, but sent them on straight to join the troops collecting above. This is a real mark of confidence in the Sepoys and in ourselves. Besides, it will do good at Allahabad, and along the road, to see Europeans moving up, party after party, so fast. So if anything does happen to Benares before other Europeans join, your lordship must excuse the despatch of these forty-four men as an error of judgment on the right side." Other Europeans had been expected from Dinapore, but scarcely had the men of the Eighty-fourth been pressed forward, when tidings came that the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore, which had been proceeding upwards to the relief of Benares, had "stuck fast at Chapra." "So all hopes for the present," it was added, "from that quarter are gone." "Brave Brigadier Ponsonby," continued the Commissioner, "calls the failure of the Dinapore relief 'a slight contretemps, somewhat unpleasant, but it cannot be helped.' I am glad we did not know of it yesterday evening, as it might have prevented the despatch of the forty-four men to Cawnpore." But, next day, when further reinforcements arrived, they were all hurried onward to Cawnpore. "I had another telegram this morning," wrote Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning on the 27th, "from Sir Henry Lawrence, begging me to spare no expense in hurrying up European aid. We send up all the men we get from Calcutta. Thirty-eight more will go this evening. We do not keep one for ourselves." Even the detachment of the Tenth from Dinapore was to be sent on "the moment it arrives." "Your lordship may feel assured," added the Commissioner, "that nothing will be left undone to insure the quickest possible relief to Cawnpore. I have let Sir H. Wheeler know what we are doing to relieve him, as Hope is half the battle."

1857.
May 25—27.

1857. May.

Diversities of English manhood.

Thus, already, was the great national courage of the English beginning to take many shapes. Whilst some, girding up their loins, were eager to anticipate danger and to strike at once, smiting everywhere, hip and thigh, like the grand remorseless heroes of the Old Testament, others were fain to oppose to the mass of rebellion that was surging upwards to the surface, the calm impassive fortitude of patient resolution, born of an abiding faith in God. Men of different temperaments and different convictions then wrought or waited according to the faith that was in them, with self-devotion beyond all praise. There was need of strenuous action in those days; but there was need also of that calm confidence which betrays no sign of misgiving, and the very quietude of which indicates a consciousness of strength. Restricted sympathy and narrow toleration are among the manifestations of our national character, not less than the broad many-sided courage of which I have spoken; and therefore it has happened that sometimes rash judgments have been passed by men incapable of understanding other evidences of bravery than those which their own would put forth in similar crises.* But it may be easier to go out to battle with death than quietly to await its coming. The energy that stimulates the one is less rare than the patience that inspires the other. But this quiet courage must be content to wait for quiet times to be estimated at its true worth.†

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* Charles Dickens, in a notice of the Life of Walter Savage Landor, which I have read since the passage in the text was written, says that Landor's "animosities were chiefly referable to his singular inability to dissociate other people's ways of thinking from his own." But I am inclined to think that this inability, so far from being singular, is the commonest thing in the world.

† How utterly free the Commissioner was from the least leaven of official jealousy, and how eager he was to do justice and to get justice done to his colleagues, may be seen

1857. May.

Henry Carre Tucker.

Henry Tucker was a Christian gentleman, in whom the high courage of our race took this latter form. He went about, fearless and confident, saying to himself, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation; my high tower, and my refuge; my Saviour."* And in this abundant, overflowing confidence and resignation he seemed to despise all human means of defence, and almost to regard defensive efforts—"secondary means"—as a betrayal of want of faith in the Almighty. "Rather against Ponsonby's and my wish," he wrote to the Governor-General, "but by the advice of Messrs. Gubbins and Lind, and at the entreaty of the European residents, arms and ammunition have, this day, been issued out to all who required them. I hope that it will make their minds easy, and that they will rest quiet. I am so thankful we have no place of defence here. We have nowhere to run to, so must stand firm—and hitherto there has not been one particle of panic and confusion." And he said that if the enemy came he would go out to meet them with a bible in his hand, as David had gone out to meet Goliath with a pebble and a sling. He rode out in the most exposed places, evening after evening, with his daughter, as in quiet times; and when some one suggested to him that the

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in the following extracts from letters written by him to Lord Canning: "Mr. F. Gubbins is a very superior man, and will make a model commissioner. I feel very thankful to have such a coadjutor here to make up for my own great deficiencies." And in another letter the Commissioner says: "Mr. Gubbins is carrying on the work in this district most energetically. Under the blessing of Providence, he has been the means of securing great peace and quiet in the city and neighbourhood." And again: "I hope your lordship will find time for a letter of *hearty* thanks to Mr. F. Gubbins for his beautiful police arrangements and general exertions, in which Mr. Lind has aided greatly."

* He wrote to Lord Canning that the 22nd chapter of Samuel II. (which contains these words) had been "their stand-by."

1857. May. hat which he wore, being of a peculiar character, would clearly indicate the Commissioner, and afford a mark for a rebel shot, he said that he was as safe in one head-dress as in another, and had no thought of a change.

Language and action of this kind might be regarded as mere imbecility. It is not strange, indeed, that a man of Mr. Tucker's character was described as an amiable enthusiast quite unequal to the occasion; for his courage was not of the popular type, and his character not intelligible to the multitude. But, even looked upon in the light of mere human wisdom, the course which was favoured by the Benares Commissioner had much, at that time, to recommend it. For as the absolute weakness of the European community, with only thirty effective soldiers to defend them, forbade any successful resort to arms, it was sound policy thus to preserve a quietude of demeanour, significant of confidence—confidence both in our own security and in the loyalty of those who surrounded and who might have crushed us in an hour.* In continual communication, not only with Lord Canning at Calcutta, but with the chiefs of all the great stations, as Dinapore, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Agra, Henry Tucker knew what was being done in some quarters, and what was needed in others, to meet the difficulties of the crisis. He knew that help was coming from below; and that if rebellion were smouldering either in the Lines or in the City, the longer it could be left to smoulder, before bursting into a blaze, the better. The confiding policy was the temporising policy. Those who best knew the character of the Bengal Sepoy, knew that a vague fear, more impressive for its very vagueness, was driving thousands into rebellion; and that the best way to keep things quiet was to do nothing to excite or to alarm. And so the month of May wore on, and European reinforcements came from below; but, in spite of the great temptation to retain them, Tucker and Ponsonby had strength to send them onward to succour others. They knew that they were exposing themselves to the reproaches of their comrades; but they felt that they could bear even this. "You and I," wrote Ponsonby to the Commissioner, "can bear much in such a cause. To aid the distressed is not so very wicked."

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* I do not wish it to be inferred from this that I think the serving out of arms and ammunition to the European Residents was a mistake; but I can appreciate Mr. Tucker's motives, and understand his reasons for inscribing "Thorough" on his policy of inaction. It will be seen presently that Lord Canning, though he admired the calm confidence of Mr. Tucker, sided with Mr. Gubbins in this matter, and I do not doubt that he was right.

Encouragement from Lord Canning.

The high bearing of the chief officers at Benares excited the admiration of the Governor-General. And in the midst of all his urgent duties—his pressing cares and anxieties—Lord Canning found, or made, time, to write letters of stirring encouragement to all, of whose good deeds he had ample assurance. Whether the well-doer were a General Officer, a Civil or Political Commissioner, or a young regimental subaltern, Lord Canning wrote to him, with his own hand, a letter of cordial thanks, full of frank kindliness, which braced up the recipient to new exertions and made him ever love the writer. He knew the effect at such a time of prompt recognition of good service, and he felt that such recognition, under the hand of secretaries, public or private, would lose half its influence for good. He had a wonderful grace of letter-writing; and there are

1857. May. many now who treasure up, as their most cherished possessions, the few expressive lines, warm from the heart, in which, amidst dangers and difficulties that might well have excused graver omissions, the Governor-General poured forth his gratitude to his subordinates for good aid of any kind—for wise counsel, for fertility of resource, for active heroism, or for patient courage.

Thus, on the 23rd of May, he wrote to Mr. Tucker: "Although it represents a most critical state of things at Benares, it satisfies me that the crisis is met with calm courage, based upon that which alone is the foundation of true courage, and that events as they arise will be dealt with temperately, firmly, and with sound judgment. You have, indeed, a precious stake upon the issue. I sympathise deeply with your family. If they need to be assured of it, I beg you to tell them that not an hour has been, or will be, lost in sending aid to Benares, and wherever else it may be most urgently required. . . . Come what may, do not fear any aspersions or misrepresentations. No one shall be ignorant how nobly the authority of our Government, and the honour and dignity of Englishmen, has been upheld at Benares."

May 30. And to Mr. Gubbins he wrote, a week afterwards, saying: "If I had more leisure for writing letters, I should not have left you so long without a word of thanks for your admirable and most judicious exertions. I know from Mr. Tucker's letters and messages, and also from other quarters, how much is due to you and to Mr. Lind, and I beg you both to believe that I am most grateful for it. You have all had a difficult game to play—if ever there was one; and your success has been hitherto complete. I pray that you may carry it through. You have done really good service in the Bazaars, in obtaining a reduction of the price of grain." And he then added, with reference to the difference of opinion which had prevailed respecting the arming of the Europeans, "I think you quite right in recommending that arms should not be refused to the Europeans, who desired them. Your self-confidence has been made quite plain by the calm front you have already shown to all danger; and I do not believe that any of the advantages thereby gained will be sacrificed by the adoption of a common-sense precaution, which does not necessarily imply mistrust of those more immediately around you, when, as is too surely the case, there is abundance of danger at a little distance."* 1857. May 30.

June, 1857. The mutiny at Azimgurh.

But although outwardly there was fair promise of continued tranquillity, as the month of May came to a close a crisis was, indeed, approaching. The birth of June was ushered in by the familiar work of the incendiary. A line of Sepoys' huts recently vacated was fired; and it was found that the wretched scum of Delhi royalty were in close communication with the Incendiaries. Then news came that the Sepoy Regiment at Azimgurh, sixty miles off, had revolted. This was the Seventeenth Regiment, under the command of Major Burroughs. It had been believed all along to be tainted, for it had been brigaded with the Nineteenth and Thirty-fourth, which had been ignominiously disbanded, and it was known that some of the men of the former were harboured in its Lines. Its insolence had been manifested unchecked, for Burroughs was not equal to the occasion; and although the Magistrate, Horne, had himself addressed

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* MS. Correspondence of Lord Canning.

1857. May—June. the Sepoys, and otherwise striven to keep them true to their salt, the evil influences had prevailed, so that before the end of the month the men of the Seventeenth were ripe for revolt.* It happened that just at this critical moment they scented the spoil. The rattle of the rupees was heard in the distance. A treasure-escort was coming in from Goruckpore, under charge of a Company of the Seventeenth Sepoys and some Horsemen of the Thirteenth Irregular Cavalry, and this was to have been despatched, with the surplus treasure of Azimgurh, to Benares, under command of Lieutenant Palliser, who had been sent from the latter place with a detachment of the Thirteenth to escort it. Five lakhs of rupees had come from Goruckpore, and two lakhs were added to it at Azimgurh; seventy thousand pounds in the hard bright coin of the country, and this was now in the grasp of the Sepoys. The temptation was more than they could resist. So they rose and loudly declared that the treasure should not leave the station. This stern resolution, however, seems to have been lulled for a time, and on the evening of June 3. the 3rd of June, the treasure-escort marched out from Azimgurh. It was felt, however, that the danger had not been escaped, and that at any moment the Sepoys might break into open rebellion. The officers and their wives were dining at the Mess of the Seventeenth, when all their anxieties were confirmed by the well-known warning voice of the guns. It was plain that the firing was in the direction of the Parade-ground. A beating of drums was soon heard; and no words were needed to express the assurance of all that the Sepoys had risen.* There was then a scene of confusion, which it is not easy accurately to describe. The ladies and non-combatants hurried off to the Cutcherry, which had been fortified by the Magistrate and his colleagues, and there barricaded themselves. Meanwhile the Sepoys, having shot their Quartermaster and their Quartermaster-Sergeant,† but, with the strange inconsistency of conduct which distinguished all their movements, having spared and, indeed, protected the rest of their officers, hurried after the treasure-escort to seize the coin on the road to Benares. And with them went the myrmidons of the Police-force, which Horne had made vast efforts to strengthen for the protection of the jail, but which had displayed its zeal in the hour of our trouble by releasing the prisoners, and giving up the houses of the English to plunder and conflagration.

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* On May 24, when some men impudently rejected extra cartridges which were served out to them and afterwards violently assaulted a Native officer, Major Burroughs found himself too weak to punish.

When they swarmed down upon him, all armed and accoutred and eager for the spoil, Palliser found that he was helpless. The troopers of the Thirteenth Irregulars were wavering. They were not so far gone in rebellion as to desire the death of their officers, but a strong national sympathy restrained them from acting against their countrymen. The officers, therefore, were saved. But the treasure was lost. The Sepoys of the Seventeenth‡ carried it back

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* There were two post guns stationed at Azimgurh. These the mutineers seized at the commencement of the outbreak. They were afterwards taken into Oude.

† Lieutenant Hutchinson and Quartermaster-Sergeant Lewis.

‡ It is stated on the authority of Lieutenant Constable of the Seventeenth, that the Sepoys "behaved with romantic courtesy." "They formed a square round their officers, and said that they not only would not touch, but would protect them, only that there were some of the mutineers who had sworn the death of particular officers, and therefore they begged the whole party to take to their carriages and be off at once. 'But how are we to get our carriages?' said they, 'seeing that they are scattered all through the station.' 'Ah, we will fetch them,' said the Sepoys; and so they did, and gave the party an escort for ten miles out of the station on the

1857. June. to Azimgurh, whilst the Irregulars escorted their officers on to Benares. Meanwhile, the European Residents of the former place had fled to Ghazeepore; and when the Sepoys returned to their old station, they found all European authority gone, and the official functionaries, civil and military, swept out of it to a man. So, flushed with success, they marched off to Fyzabad in military array, with all the pomp and panoply of war.

The crisis at Benares. June 4, 1857. When news of these events reached Benares, crusted over in the first instance with some exaggerations, it was plain that the hour was approaching when tranquillity could no longer be maintained. But the vigorous activity of Gubbins and the calm composure of Tucker, holding rebellion in restraint whilst succours were far-off, had already saved Benares; for now fresh reinforcements were at hand, and with them one who knew well how to turn them to account. After despatching his men, as has been already told,* by the railway to Raneegunge, Colonel Neill had made his way, by train and horse-dawk to Benares with the utmost possible despatch, eager to avenge the blood of his slaughtered countrymen. And with this Madras Colonel came the first assertion of English manhood that had come from the South to the rescue of our people in the Gangetic provinces. Leading the way to future conquests, he came to strike and to destroy. He was one of those who wisely thought

Arrival of Neill.

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road to Ghazeepore. It has been remarked that to complete the romance they ought to have offered the officers a month's pay out of the treasure they were plundering."—*Annals of the Indian Rebellion, Part IV.* This is somewhat inconsistent with the statement (*Red Pamphlet*) that the Sepoys of the Seventeenth implored the Irregulars to slay their officers, "appealing to religion, nationality, love of money, even offering 5000*l.* for each head." These inconsistencies, however, were fast becoming common phenomena.

* *Ante*, p. 132.

1857. June 4.

from the first, that to strike promptly and to strike vigorously would be to strike mercifully; and he went to the work before him with a stern resolution not to spare. Both from the North and from the South, at this time, the first great waves of the tide of conquest were beginning to set in towards the centres of the threatened provinces. From one end of the line of danger, Canning, and from the other, Lawrence, was sending forth his succours—neither under-estimating the magnitude of the peril, but both confident of the final result. It was the work of the latter, as will be told hereafter, to rescue Delhi, whilst the former was straining every effort to secure the safety of Benares, Allahabad, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and other lesser places dependent upon them. And now assistance had really come to the first of these places. A detachment of Madras Fusiliers was at Benares, and the men of the Tenth Foot, from Dinapore, whose arrival had been delayed by an accident, had also made their appearance. It was determined, therefore, that the Sepoys should be disarmed.

The question of disarming.

But a question then arose as to the hour of disarming. The first idea was, that the regiment should be paraded on the following morning, and that then the several companies, after an assuring explanation, should be called upon to lay down their arms. But there were those in Benares, to whom the thought of even an hour's delay was an offence and an abomination. When work of this kind is to be done, it should be done, they thought, promptly. Stimulated by the intelligence from Azimgurh, and suspecting what was in store for them, the Sepoys might rise before morning, and then all our councils and cautions would be vain. The chief command was in

1857. June 4. Ponsonby's hands, and it was for him to give the word for disarming. It appears that Colonel Gordon, who had ascertained that the more turbulent spirits of the city were in communication with the Sepoys, accompanied the Brigadier to the house of the Commissioner to consult with him. Tucker suggested that they should call on Gubbins; so they went to the Judge's residence, and there they received ample confirmation of the reports which Gordon had heard. Soon afterwards they met Colonel Neill, who was eager for immediate action;* and, after some discussion, the Brigadier consented to hold a parade at five o'clock, and at once to proceed to the work of disarmament.

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* The circumstances conducing to this change of plan have been variously stated. Mr. Taylor, in his official report already quoted, says: "It appears that as Brigadier Ponsonby was returning home after the Council, he met Colonel Neill, who recommended him to disarm the corps at once. Disregarding all other consideration, he hurried to the parade ground." But in a letter before me, written by Brigadier Ponsonby in July, that officer states that, "On the 4th of June Lieutenant-Colonel Gordon, commanding the Regiment of Loodhianah, called and informed me that he had reason to believe the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry were entering into a conspiracy with some of the bad characters of the City, in view to the subversion of the British power in Benares. After some conversation on the subject, in which I ascertained from the Lieutenant-Colonel that he considered that he could rely on the fidelity of his own regiment, we agreed to go together to the Commissioner, Mr. Tucker, and to acquaint him with what had been communicated. We proceeded to Mr. Tucker, and on broaching the subject of our visit, he proposed that we should go to Mr. F. Gubbins, who lived close at hand, and we did so. Mr. Gubbins, it appeared, had heard from his spies that which not only confirmed Colonel Gordon's report, but gave much more detailed information as to the secret proceedings of the men of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry. Colonel Neill came in while Mr. Gubbins was speaking, and soon afterwards the Brigade-major, Captain Dodgson, entered to report that the treasure, which was on its way from Azimgurh to Benares under a guard of fifty men of the Irregular Cavalry, had been plundered by the Seventeenth Native Infantry—the guard of the Irregulars having connived at the deed. It was immediately felt that this circumstance, occurring in such close proximity to Benares, rendered the adoption at once of some strong measures imperative, and Lieutenant-colonel Gordon proposed the disarming of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, to which I acceded. There was some discussion as to whether this should be attempted at once, or at ten A.M. on the following day. Mr. Gubbins having expressed his opinion that emissaries from the Seventeenth Native Infantry would soon be in Benares, it was settled to disarm the Thirty-seventh at five o'clock, and it being now past four, it was also arranged to keep the measure as quiet as possible in order that the regiment might not be on its guard." Nothing can be more distinct than this. But Colonel

1857. June 4.

Then Ponsonby and Gordon went together to the house of the latter, where they found or were joined by Major Barrett of the Thirty-seventh. The Sepoy officer, after the manner of his kind, with that fond and affectionate confidence in his men, which was luring so many to destruction, solemnly protested against the measure, as one which would break their hearts. To this Ponsonby replied, that what he had learnt from Mr. Gubbins had left him no alternative, and that, therefore, it was Barrett's duty to warn the officers to be ready for the five o'clock parade. The Brigadier had ordered his horse to be brought to Gordon's house, and now the two mounted and rode to the parade-ground, to plan the best disposition of the troops. The horse which Ponsonby rode had not been ridden for a month. It was fresh and restive,

Neill, with equal distinctness, declares that Ponsonby and Gordon called upon him, and that he (Neill) recommended the afternoon parade. In his official despatch he says: "Brigadier Ponsonby consulted with me about taking the muskets from the Thirty-seventh, leaving them their side-arms. He proposed waiting until the following morning to do this. I urged its being done at one, to which he agreed, and *left my quarters* to make his arrangements." In his private journal, too, he records that, "The brigadier *called on me* at three P.M., with Colonel Gordon of the Sikhs, informing me of the mutiny of the Seventeenth at Azimgurh . . . very undecided . . : . would put off everything until to-morrow. I speak out, and urge him to act at once, which he unwillingly agrees to . . . the Europeans to parade at five P.M. . . . the Thirty-seventh to be disarmed . . . the Irregulars and Sikhs said to be staunch to act with us." We have, therefore, before us three conflicting statements. Mr. Taylor says that Ponsonby met Neill as the former was going home from Gubbins's house. Ponsonby says that Neill came into Gubbins's house, when he (the Brigadier) and Gordon were there. And Neill says that the Brigadier and Gordon visited him in his own quarters. The matter is of little importance in itself; but the discrepancies cited afford an apt illustration of the difficulties which beset the path of a conscientious historian. On the whole, I am disposed to think that Neill, writing on the day of the events described, is more likely to be correct than Ponsonby, writing a month afterwards, or Taylor, collecting facts, after the lapse of more than a year.

1857. June 4. and the motion of the animal, aided by the slant rays of the afternoon sun, soon began to affect him. Enfeebled as he was by previous illness, he became, in his own words, "most anxious and uneasy in mind and body." But, whilst Gordon was drawing up the Sikh Regiment, he rode to the European Barracks, where he found Neill mustering the Europeans, and Olpherts getting ready his guns. The necessary orders were given; but the Brigadier felt that he was no longer equal to the responsibility of the work that lay before him.

And, in truth, it was difficult and dangerous work that then lay before the English commanders. The Native force was some two thousand strong. The Europeans hardly mustered two hundred and fifty.* Of the temper of the Sepoy Regiment there was no doubt. The Irregulars had been tried on the road from Azimgurh, where they had betrayed the weakness of their fidelity, if they had not manifested the strength of their discontent.† But the Sikh Regiment was believed to be faithful; and, if it were faithful, there could be no doubt of the result of that afternoon's parade. It is said that, as they were assembling for parade, they were in high spirits, and appeared to be eager to be led against the Hindostanees of the Regular Army. Not merely in Benares, but in all parts of the country, was it of the highest moment that the Sikh fighting men should be on our side; for it was believed that the fame of their loyalty would spread, on all sides, to the confines of our Empire, and that, throughout the Punjab itself, the renown of their achievements would stimulate others to do likewise. But everywhere so great a sensitiveness thrilled through the Native troops of all nationalities, that it was always possible that the weight of a feather in the balance might determine the out-turn of events on the side of loyalty or rebellion.

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* The official returns state—H.M.'s Tenth Regiment, one hundred and fifty men and three officers; Madras Fusiliers, sixty men and three officers; Artillery, thirty men and two officers.

† These regiments of Irregular Cavalry were differently constituted from those of the Regular Sepoy Army. They had few European officers, and those only picked men, who had the greatest pride in their several corps, and seldom or never any desire to leave them. The troopers, who received high pay and found their own horses, were generally men of a better class, and the position of the Native officers was of a higher and more responsible character than in the regular Army. All these things were at first supposed to be favourable to the continuance of the fidelity of the Irregular Cavalry. But it was soon found that they were as incurably tainted as the rest.

The Disarming Parade.

When the order for disarming had gone forth, Colonel Spottiswoode and his officers proceeded to the parade-ground of the Thirty-seventh, turned out the regiment, and ordered them to lodge their muskets in the bells-of-arms. There were about four hundred men on parade, the remainder, with the exception of one company at Chunar, being on detached duty in the station. To Spottiswoode it appeared that the men were generally well-disposed. There were no immediate signs of resistance. First the grenadier company, and then the other companies up to No. 6, quietly lodged their arms in obedience to the word of command. At this point a murmur arose, and some of the men were heard to say that they were betrayed—that the Europeans were coming to shoot them down when they were disarmed. Hearing this, Spottiswoode cried out that it was false, and appealed to the Native officers, who replied that he had always been a father to them. But a panic was now upon them, for they saw the white troops advancing. By word of command from Ponsonby the Europeans and the guns were moving forward towards the Sepoys' lines. Opposite to the quarter-guard of the Thirty-seventh

1857. June 4. the Brigadier ordered the little force under Colonel Neill to be wheeled into line and halted. He then went forward and spoke to the Sepoys of the guard. He said that they were required to give up their arms, and that if they obeyed as good soldiers, no harm of any kind would befall them. As he spoke he laid his hand assuringly on the shoulder of one of the Sepoys, who said that they had committed no fault. To this Ponsonby replied in Hindostanee: "None; but it is necessary that you should do as you are ordered, as so many of your brethren have broken their oaths and murdered their officers, who never injured them." Whilst he was still speaking, some of the men shouted to their comrades on the right and left; a stray shot or two was fired from the second company, and presently the Sepoys rushed in a body to the bells-of-arms, seized their muskets, loaded and fired upon both their own officers and the Europeans. Going about the work before them in a systematic, professional manner, they sent some picked men and good marksmen to the front as skirmishers, who, kneeling down, whilst others handed loaded muskets to them, fired deliberately upon the Europeans from a distance of eighty or a hundred yards. Seven or eight men of the Tenth were shot down, and then the rest fell back in line with the rear of the guns. Meanwhile the officers of the Thirty-seventh, who had been providentially delivered from the fire of their men, were seeking safety with the guns; but Major Barrett, who had always protested against the disarming of the regiment, and now believed that it was foully used, cast in his lot with it, and would not move, until a party of Sepoys carried him off to a place of safety.

To the fire of the Sepoy musketeers the British Infantry now responded, and the guns were wheeled round to open upon the mutineers with irresistible grape. The English gunners were ready for immediate action. Anticipating resistance, Olpherts had ordered his men, when they moved from their lines, to carry their cartridges and grape-shot in their hands.* The word of command given, the guns were served with almost magical rapidity; and the Thirty-seventh were in panic flight, with their faces turned towards the Lines. But from behind the cover of their huts they maintained a smart fire upon the Europeans; so Olpherts, loading his nine-pounders both with grape and round shot, sent more messengers of death after them, and drove them out of their sheltering homes. Throwing their arms and accoutrements behind them, and many of them huddling away clear out of cantonments beyond the reach of the avenging guns, they made their way to the city, or dispersed themselves about the country, ready for future mischief and revenge. 1857. June 4.

Meanwhile, the detachment of Irregular Cavalry and Gordon's Sikhs had come on to parade. It was soon obvious what was the temper of the former. Their commander, Captain Guise,† had been killed by a Sepoy of the Thirty-seventh, and Dodgson, the Brigade-Major, was ordered to take his place. He had scarce taken command, when he was fired at by a trooper. Another attempted to cut him down. But the Sikhs appear to have had no foregone intention of turning against our people. Whether the object of the Parade and the intentions of the British officers were ever sufficiently explained to them is not very

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* Whether this was observed by the Sepoys I know not; but if it were, there can be no difficulty in accounting for their suspicion and alarm.

† One writer says that Guise's head was afterwards split open by his own troopers. He was shot on the rear of the Lines, as he was going to parade.

1857. June 4. apparent; but they seem to have been, in this juncture, doubtful and suspicious, and it needed but a spark to excite them into a blaze. The outburst of the Irregulars first caused them to waver. They did not know what it all portended; they could not discern friends from foes. At this critical moment, one of the Sikhs fired upon Colonel Gordon, whilst another of his men moved forward to his protection. In an instant the issue was determined. Olpherts was limbering up his guns, when Crump, of the Madras Artillery, who had joined him on parade and was acting as his subaltern, cried out that the Sikh regiment had mutinied. At once the word was given to unlimber, and at the same moment there was a cry that the Sikhs were about to charge. At this time they were shouting and yelling frantically, and firing in all directions—their bullets passing over and through the English battery. They were only eighty or a hundred yards from us on an open parade-ground; and at that time our Artillery were unsupported by the British Infantry, who had followed the mutineers of the Thirty-seventh Regiment into their Lines. It was not a moment for hesitation. The sudden rush of a furious multitude upon our guns, had we been unprepared for them, might have overwhelmed that half-battery with its thirty English gunners; and Benares might have been lost to us. So Olpherts, having ascertained that the officers of the Sikh corps had taken refuge in his rear; brought round his guns and poured a shower of grape into the regiment. Upon this they made a rush upon the guns—a second and a third—but were driven back by the deadly showers from our field-pieces, and were soon in confused flight. And with them went the mutineers of the Irregular Cavalry; so the work was thoroughly

1857. June 4.

done, and Olpherts remained in possession of the field.

Neill in command.

Whilst these events were developing themselves on the parade-ground, the little power of endurance still left in the Brigadier was rapidly failing him, and before the afternoon's work was done he was incapable of further exertion. The slant rays of the declining sun, more trying than its meridian height, dazzled and sickened the old soldier. The pain and discomfort which he endured were so great that he was unable any longer to sit his horse. Having previously given orders to Colonel Spottiswoode to fire the Sepoys' lines that none might find shelter in them, he made over the command to Colonel Neill, who eagerly took all further military responsibility on himself.* The victory of the Few over the Many was soon completed. Some who had sought shelter in the Lines were driven out and destroyed, whilst a few who succeeded in hiding themselves were burnt to death in their huts.†

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* It is not easy to determine the exact period at which Ponsonby gave over the command to Neill. From the official report of the latter it would appear to have been done before the Sikhs broke into mutiny, but Ponsonby's own statement would fix the time at a later period. The account in the text is the official version of the transfer of command; but the fact, I believe is, that Neill, seeing Ponsonby on the ground, went up to him and said, "General, I assume command." So Neill's journal, and oral information of an officer who heard him say it.

† There is no passage in this history on which more care and labour have been expended than on the above narrative of the disarming at Benares on the 4th of June. In compiling it I have had before me several detailed statements made by officers present at the parade, including a full narrative written by Brigadier Ponsonby, and furnished to me by his widow, and the private journals and letters of Colonel Neill, as well as his official reports. Colonel Spottiswoode's statement is published in the Parliamentary Return relating to the Regiments that have mutinied. There was also a very clearly written narrative by Ensign Tweedie (one of the young officers wounded by the fire of the Sikh regiment), printed in the newspapers of the day. Besides these, I have had the advantage of much personal conversation with one of the chief surviving actors in the scene described, and have received from him written answers to my questions on all doubtful points. I have a strong conviction, therefore, that the story cannot be more correctly told.

1857. June 4. The military question considered.

All the circumstances of this parade of the 4th of June being fairly reviewed and impartially considered, it is not strange that some should think that it was grievously mismanaged. That this was the opinion of the highest authorities at the time is certain. Writing on the 6th of June to the Governor-General, the Benares Commissioner said, "I fear the business of disarming was very badly managed indeed. The Sepoys feel very sore at what they consider an attack on men, many of whom were unarmed at the time. This is not a point for a civilian to discuss, but the general opinion seems to be that the affair was much mismanaged." This opinion was shared by Lord Canning, who wrote, a fortnight afterwards to the President of the India Board, that the disarming "was done hurriedly and not judiciously." "A portion of a regiment of Sikhs," he added, "was drawn into resistance, who, had they been properly dealt with, would, I fully believe, have remained faithful." And, sixteen months afterwards, the civil functionary, on whom it devolved to write an official account of these transactions, deliberately recorded his belief, it may be assumed after full investigation, that the Sikhs were brought out not knowing what was to be done; that the whole affair was a surprise; that, as a corps, they were loyal, and "would have stood any test less rude."

The inference to be drawn from this is not so much that the business was done badly as that it was done hastily; or rather that it was done badly because it was done hastily. The sudden resolution to disarm the Thirty-seventh on that Thursday afternoon left no time for explanations. If the whole of the black troops at Benares had been known to be steeped in sedition to the lips, and ready for an immediate outbreak, it would have been sound policy to surprise them, for only by such a course could our little handful of white soldiers hope to overthrow the multitude of the enemy. But whilst the regular Sepoys were only suspected, in whole or in part, of treacherous designs, and the intentions of the Irregulars were still doubtful, there had been nothing in the conduct of the Sikh regiment to cast a doubt upon its fidelity. It was an occasion, indeed, on which kindly explanations and assurances might have had the best effect. But there was no time for this. When it was tried with the Thirty-seventh, both by the Brigadier and by the Colonel, it was too late; for the Europeans were advancing, and the panic had commenced. And with the Sikhs it seems not to have been tried at all. It would, however, be scarcely just to cast the burden of blame on any individual officer. What was evil was the suddenness of the resolution to disarm and the haste of its execution. But this is said to have been a necessary evil. And whilst we know the worst that actually happened, we do not know the something worse that might have resulted from the postponement of the disarming parade. Even at the best, it is contended, if the Thirty-seventh had been quietly disarmed, it would have been sore embarrassment to us to watch all those disarmed Sepoys. It would, indeed, to a great extent have shut up our little European force, and, thus crippling its powers of action, have greatly diminished our strength. Moreover, it is contended that, in the crisis that had arisen, this stern example, these bloody instructions, had great effect throughout that part of the Gangetic Provinces, and, indeed, through-

June 4.

1857. June 4. out the whole of the country. It was made manifest that European military power was neither dead nor paralysed. There was a beginning of retribution. The white troops were coming up from beyond the seas. Though few in numbers at first, there were thousands behind them, and Upper India would soon be covered by our battalions. The moral effect of this, it was said, would be prodigious. The mailed hand of the English conqueror was coming down again crushingly upon the black races.

And even as regards the Sikh corps, it was said that a large proportion of the Regiment—the Regiment from Loodhianah—were not Sikhs, but Hindostanees; that they were the brethren of the regular Sepoys, and that they had come on to Parade with their pieces loaded. This last fact is not conclusive against them. It may have been the result wholly of uncertainty and suspicion. But Olpherts, when he fired upon them, was fully assured that they had broken into open mutiny, and nothing ever afterwards tended to weaken his original conviction. That there was mutiny in the Regiment—and mutiny of the worst kind—however limited it may have been, is certain; and if this were the first, it was far from being the last instance of a whole regiment being irrevocably compromised by the misconduct of a few Sepoys. An officer, with his guns loaded, in the presence of an overwhelming number of Native soldiers, cannot draw nice distinctions or disentangle the knot of conflicting probabilities. He must act at once. The safety of a station, perhaps of an Empire, may depend upon the prompt discharge of a shower of grape. And the nation in such an emergency will less readily forgive him for doing too little than for doing too much.

1857. June 4—5. The night afterwards.

Complete as was the military success, the danger was not passed. The dispersion of a multitude of mutinous Sepoys might have been small gain to us in the presence of a rebellious population. If the malcontents of the city had risen at this time and made common cause with the dispersed soldiery and with their comrades under arms at the different guards, they might have overwhelmed our little gathering of Christian people. But the bountiful Providence, in which Commissioner Tucker had trusted, and which seemed to favour the brave efforts of Judge Gubbins, raised up for us friends in this awful crisis, and the fury of the many was mercifully restrained. It had been arranged that in the event of an outburst, all the Christian non-combatants should betake themselves to the Mint, which lay between the cantonment and the city, as the building best suited to defensive purposes. The rattle of the musketry and the roar of the guns from the parade-ground proclaimed that the Sepoys had risen. There were then great alarm and confusion. Numbers of our people made for the Mint. The missionaries left Benares behind them, and set their faces towards Ramnuggur on their way to Chunar.* The civilians, some with their wives and families, sought refuge, in the first instance, in the Collector's Cutcherry, ascending to the roof of the building, where at least they were safe from capture.† But there was a great and reasonable fear that the Sikhs of the Treasury-guard,

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* There were some exceptions to the general exodus of the missionaries. Mr. Leupholt, of the Church Missionary Society, seems to have stood fast in the mission premises with his flock of Native Christians. This excellent man afterwards rendered good service to the British Government by exerting his influence, which was considerable in the neighbourhood, to obtain supplies for our European troops.

† The Commissioner was not of this party. He had gone to the Mint.

1857. June 4—5. rendered furious by the slaughter of their countrymen, would seize the Government coin, and the crown jewels of their own exiled Queen, which were stored with it, and would then fire the building and attack our Christian people wheresoever they could be found.

Good services of Soorut Singh. And that they would have struck heavily at us is not to be doubted, if one of their nation, a Sikh chief of good repute, had not come to our aid in the hour of our greatest need. This was the Sirdar Soorut Singh, who, after the second Sikh war, had been sent to reside at Benares, in honourable durance, and who had fully appreciated the generous treatment he had received from the English. He had unbounded confidence in Gubbins; and when the crisis arose, he manfully shouldered a double-barrelled gun and accompanied his English friend to the Cutcherry. Promptly and energetically he came forward to aid us, and by his explanations and persuasions softened down the anger of the Sikh soldiery, who might have been excused if they were burning to avenge the blood of their slaughtered comrades. Thus assured and admonished, they not only abstained from all acts of personal violence, but they quietly gave up the Government treasure and the Lahore jewels to the Europeans, to be conveyed to a place of safety.*

Pundit Gokool-Chund. Nor was this noble-minded Sikh Sirdar the only friend who rose up to aid us in this conjuncture. Even from that great hot-bed of Hindooism, Brahminism itself sent forth a staunch ally and potent deliverer to be a present help to us in our trouble. Pundit Gokool-Chund, a high-caste Brahmin, known to all, respected by all in Benares, flung all the weight of his influence into the scales in our favour. He was a servant of the Government—Nazir of the Judge's Court—and as such in constant intercourse with Gubbins. Had he been a Christian gentleman, he could not have striven, day and night, more ceaselessly and more successfully to succour our people. There was another, too, who put forth a protecting hand, and was earnest in his endeavours to allay the inquietude of the people. This was a wealthy and influential Hindoo noble—Rao Deonarain Singh—a loyal and devoted subject of the British Government, a man of high intelligence and enlightenment, liberal and humane. No words could exaggerate the importance of his services. Nor was the titular Rajah of Benares himself wanting in good offices to the English. On the night of that 4th of June, he succoured the missionary fugitives, and, from first to last, he placed all his resources at our disposal, and seemed honestly to wish well to our cause. Truly, it would have gone ill with our little handful of Christian people, if God had not raised up for us in our sorest need these staunch and powerful friends from among the multitude of the Heathen.*

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* The place of safety was within the strong cells of the Artillery Congee-House, whither the treasure was taken, by the advice, I believe, of Captain Olpherts, who had always protested against the notion of making the same building available both as a refuge for the women and children and a storehouse for the treasure. Mr. Taylor, in his Official Narrative, says the treasure was taken to the Magazine. In reward for the fidelity and forbearance of the Sikhs, the Commissioner next morning very properly distributed ten thousand rupees among them.

1857. June 4—5.

Deonarain Singh.

The Rajah of Benares.

The prompt action of Soorut Singh saved the civilians at the Cutcherry. For many hours they remained there, anxious and uncertain, calculating the chances against them, but resolute to sell their lives at the highest price. But two hours after midnight a little party of English gentlemen, headed by

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* See in Appendix a Memorandum on the Benares Rajahs.

1857. June 4—5. Gubbins, went forth in the broad moonlight to obtain the assistance of an European guard from the Mint to escort thither the fugitives at the Cutcherry. As they went, they were fired at by some Sepoys; but they returned, unharmed, with the guard, and safely conveyed their companions to the appointed place of refuge.* There the hours of morning darkness passed away in drear discomfort, and day dawned upon a scene of misery and confusion in the Mint. Officers and ladies, masters and servants, huddled together, for the most part on the roof, without much respect of persons or regard for proprieties of costume. The Europeans who had been sent for their protection bivouacked in the lower rooms, many of them utterly worn out with the exhausting labours of the day; whilst outside in the compound, or enclosure, was a strange collection of carriages, buggies, palanquins, horses, bullocks, sheep, goats, and packages of all sizes and all kinds brought in for the provisioning of the garrison.

June 5—9. State of the city. "The town is quite quiet," wrote Commissioner Tucker to Lord Canning on the following morning, "in the midst," as he said, "of the utmost noise and confusion of this crowded building," which made it difficult to write at all, and was altogether so distracting, that, though a man of grave speech, he described it as "such a Pandemonium, that it was impossible to think, write, or do anything in it." There had been an alarm in the course of the night of risings in the city; for the Mahomedans had hoisted the green flag, but nothing came of the demonstration. And days passed, but still there was quietude throughout Benares. All the circumstances of the "Sacred City of the Hindoos" being considered, it must be a source of wonder, not only that so little Christian blood was shed, but that there was so little resistance of any kind to the authority of the British Government.* "It is quite a miracle to me," wrote Commissioner Tucker to the Governor-General on the 9th of June, "how the city and station remain perfectly quiet. We all have to sleep at night in the Mint, but not a house or bungalow has been touched, and during the day everything goes on much as usual."† Wisely

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* This incident is made still brighter by an act of heroism which it is a pleasure to record. It is thus officially narrated: "Messrs. Gubbins, Caulfield, and Demomet went in a buggy to the Mint, and Mr. Jenkinson, C. S., accompanied them on horseback. As the party was crossing the bridge, Mr. Jenkinson saw some ambushed Sepoys aiming at the party in the buggy. There was no time for warning or for hesitation, and he at once reined back his horse, covering with his own body his companions in danger. It were far easier to praise such an act than to praise it worthily, and I praise it best by not praising it at all."—*Mr. Taylor's Official Narrative.*

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* Up to this time only one English officer (Captain Guise) had been killed, and four wounded—all on the parade of the 4th of June. The wounded officers were Captain Dodgson, and Ensigns Tweedie, Chapman, and Hayter. A letter from Captain Dodgson states that the last-named was "shot by the Sikhs when they turned round and fired upon us." Young Hayter was shot in both thighs, and had a third wound below the knee. The latter was so painful that the limb was amputated; but he sunk under his sufferings, and died a week or two afterwards. There is something so touching in the brief account of the poor young soldier's last days, in the letter above quoted from Captain Dodgson to Mr. Tucker, that I cannot refrain from giving the following extract from it. "He bore his wounds with the utmost fortitude, and when told that there was no hope of recovery, said he hoped he was prepared to die. . . . I used to read the Prayers for the Sick to him, and many of the Psalms of his own choosing. The last he selected was the fifty-first. He got his overland letters when I was with him, a few days before he died, and kissed them again and again, and asked me to read them to him, which I did, poor boy!"—*MS. Correspondence.*

† The following characteristic passage in the letter above quoted ought not to be withheld. "I do firmly believe," wrote Mr. Tucker, "that there is a special Divine influence at work on men's minds to keep them quiet. The few Europeans in the Mint and round the guns could do nothing to guard the Cantonment; but of all the three mutinous regiments not one seems to have thought of burning the station or plundering the houses of the residents. There is much prayer here, and I know that many prayers are offered up for us; and I fully believe that they are accepted at the Throne of Grace, and that this is the cause of the quiet we enjoy. Even with all the best possible arrangements that we can make, there is nothing to prevent the mutineers, who are hanging about, or the city rabble, from doing any mischief they please, but they do not attempt it."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June 5—9. and vigorously was Gubbins now doing his work. He had sunk the judge in the magistrate. His court was closed, and he had taken the weight of the executive upon him. And now, partly by the fear, partly by the love he had inspired in the hearts of the people, he held them in restraint, and the great city lay hushed beneath his hand.

State of the Rural Districts.

But although there was extraordinary repose in the city, in the surrounding districts violence and anarchy arose with a suddenness that was quite astounding. It was not merely that the mutinous Sepoys, hanging about the adjacent villages, were inciting others to rebellion (this was to be expected), but a great movement from within was beginning to make itself felt upon the surface of rural society, and for a while all traces of British rule were rapidly disappearing from the face of the land. Into the real character and general significance of this movement I do not purpose here to inquire. The investigation is an extensive one, and must be deliberately undertaken. It is enough, in this place, to speak of immediate results. The dispersion of the Native soldiery on the 4th of June was followed almost immediately by disorder and rapine in the contiguous country. A few days sufficed to sweep away law and order, and to produce a revolution of property, astonishing even to those who were best acquainted with the character and temper of the people. "I could not," wrote Mr. Tucker on the 13th, "have believed that the moment the hand of Government was removed there would have been so sudden a rising of landholders to plunder each other and people on the roads.* All the large landholders and auction-purchasers are paralysed and dispossessed, their agents being frequently murdered and their property destroyed."* To arrest this new danger, which threatened to become a gigantic one, overwhelming, irrepressible, our people had now to put forth all their strength. 1857. June 5—9.

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* "The Native idea now is," he added, "that British rule has slipped off, and that it is every man for himself."

June 9. Punitory enactments. On the 9th the Government of India caused Martial Law to be proclaimed in the divisions of Benares and Allahabad. On the same day, Mr. Tucker, not knowing that already the Legislature had provided the extraordinary powers which he sought†—nay, even more than he sought—wrote to the Governor-General, suggesting that he should place the Benares division "beyond the reach of Regulation Law, and give every civil officer, having the full power of magistrate, the power of life and death." "I would prefer this to Martial Law," he added, "as I do not think the greater proportion of the military can be entrusted with the power of life and death. The atrocious murders which have taken place have roused the English blood, and a very slight circumstance would cause Natives to be shot or hung. I would, therefore, much prefer retaining the powers in the hands of those who have been accustomed to weigh and to value evidence. No civilian is likely to order a man to be executed without really good cause."‡

Time soon exploded the error contained in these last words. But the Benares Commissioner, though a little blinded by class prejudice, was right when he wrote about the hot English blood, which forbade the judgment of a cool brain. Already our military officers were hunting down criminals of all kinds, and hanging them up with as little compunction as

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* See *ante*, vol. i. p. 157.

† The Act, of which a summary has been given (Book iv. chap. iv.), though passed on the 30th of May, did not receive the sanction of the Governor-General before the 8th of June.

‡ MS. Correspondence.

1857. June 9. though they had been pariah-dogs or jackals, or vermin of a baser kind. One cotemporary writer has recorded that, on the morning after the disarming parade, the first thing he saw from the Mint was a "row of gallowses." A few days afterwards military courts or commissions were sitting daily, and sentencing old and young to be hanged with indiscriminate ferocity. These executions have been described as "Colonel Neill's hangings." But Neill left Benares four or five days after the outbreak, and it did not devolve on him to confirm the sentences, of which I have heard the strongest reprobation. On one occasion, some young boys, who, perhaps, in mere sport had flaunted rebel colours and gone about beating tom-toms, were tried and sentenced to death. One of the officers composing the court, a man unsparing before an enemy under arms, but compassionate, as all brave men are, towards the weak and helpless, went with tears in his eyes to the commanding officer, imploring him to remit the sentence passed against these juvenile offenders, but with little effect on the side of mercy.* And what was done with some show of formality, either of military or of criminal law, was as nothing, I fear, weighed against what was done without any formality at all. Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts; and amateur executioners were not wanting to the occasion. One gentleman boasted of the numbers he had finished off quite "in an artistic manner," with mango-trees for gibbets and elephants for drops, the victims of this wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in "the form of a figure of eight." 1857. June 9.

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* The general reader, however, must not calculate years in such a case as they would be calculated in Europe. What, estimated by years, is a boy in England is a man in India—a husband, a father, with all the full-grown passions of maturity—and an equal sense of personal independence and responsibility.

This, it is to be presumed, was the martial law, of which such graphic details have been given by cotemporary writers, without a prevision of publicity.* But the Acts of the Legislative Council, under the strong hand of the Executive, fed the gallows with equal prodigality, though, I believe, with greater discrimination. It was a special immunity of this Benares mutiny that the prison-gates were not thrown open, and the city deluged with a flood of convicted crime. The inmates of the gaol remained in their appointed places. But even this had its attendant evils. For as crime increased, as increase it necessarily did, prison-room was wanted, and was not to be found. The great receptacle of the criminal classes was gorged to overflowing. The guilty could not be suffered wholly to escape. So the Gibbet disposed of the higher class of malefactors, and the Lash scored the backs of the lower, and sent them afloat again on the waves of tumult and disorder. But, severe as Gubbins was when the crisis was at its height, he restrained his hand when the worst had passed, and it had ceased to be an expedient of mercy to strike into the hearts of the people that terror, which diminishes crime and all its punitory consequences.

June 5. The mutiny at Jaunpore.

Meanwhile, other sources of anxiety were developing themselves in more remote places. One incident must be narrated here as immediately connected with the outbreak of the 4th of June. The story of the

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* See especially a letter, written by a private of the Seventy-eighth Highlanders, which was published in the *Times*, and quoted at some length by Mr. Montgomery Martin.

1857. June 5. Loodhianah Regiment of Sikhs has not yet been fully told. There was a detachment of it at Jaunpore, a civil station, some forty miles from Benares. When news arrived on the 5th of June that the Thirty-seventh had revolted, and were pouring into the district, they made demonstrations of fidelity to their British officers; but when later tidings came that the head-quarters of their own regiment had been fired on by the Europeans, they rose at once in open mutiny. Lieutenant Mara, the officer commanding them, was shot down. Mr. Cuppage, joint-magistrate, on his way to the jail, shared the same fate. The Treasury was plundered. And all surviving Europeans, after a humiliating surrender of their arms, were driven to seek safety in flight: British government was expunged, as it had been at Azimghur, and its chief representatives were glad to find a hiding-place for themselves in quarters which, a little time before, their *fiat* could have swept away like summer dust. Then the station was given up to plunder; and the mutiny of a few Sikh mercenaries grew into a general insurrection of the people. The houses of the English were gutted and burnt. The soldiery, burdened with money-bags, having gone off towards Oude, the plunder of "the Treasury was completed by decrepit old women and wretched little boys, who had never seen a rupee in their lives."* And all over the district, the state of things, brought about by our settlement operations and our law courts, disappeared like the bursting of a bubble. The very presence of our fugitive people, though powerless and forlorn, was an offence and an abomination to the now-dominant class, who drove them from their sanctuary in the house of a friendly Rajah to take refuge in an indigo factory. And it became one of the Benares Commissioner's greatest cares to rescue Mr. Fane and his companions from the dangers which then beset them. Having discovered their abode, he sent out "a party of Europeans and volunteers to bring them into Benares."*

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* Mr. Taylor's Official Narrative. The writer adds: "In the district not a semblance of authority was left to any one. Those who had lost their estates under our rule thought this a good time to regain them; those who had not, thought that they could make a little profit by plundering their weaker neighbours; the bolder spirits thought to secure more brilliant advantages by intercourse with the rebel powers in Oude." In no other district, Mr. Taylor observes, were "auction purchasers more numerous, old Zemindars more powerful, or the present landholders on worse terms among themselves."

Despatch of troops upwards.

Troops were now coming up every day from below. Benares was safe. Other stations were to be saved. The best service that could be rendered to the State was the prompt despatch of reinforcements to the upper country—and most of all to Allahabad and Cawnpore. This service was entrusted to Mr. Archibald Pollock.† True to his great historical name, he threw himself into the work with an amount of energy and activity which bore the best fruits. Every kind of available conveyance was picked up and turned promptly to account in the furtherance of the eagerly looked-for Europeans, whose appearance was ever welcomed by our peril-girt people as a great deliverance. Nor was want of sufficient conveyance the only difficulty to be overcome. There was a want of provisions for Europeans, especially of flour and rum; and Mr. Tucker wrote eagerly to Lord Canning to send up commissariat stores of every kind for the soldiery, "as European necessaries are not to be had here in any quantity." He was

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* Mr. Tucker to Lord Canning, June 9th. In this letter the fugitives are said to have consisted of sixteen men, five ladies, and eleven children.

† The youngest son of General Sir George Pollock. He was then joint magistrate of Benares.

1857. June. very eager at this time to save the treasure in neighbouring civil stations along the main line, as Mirzapore and Ghazepore, and he sent parties of Europeans by steamer to bring it off in safety to Benares. It was, moreover, a great object to keep the white troops in motion, and thus to display European strength, first at one point, then at another, and by means of a few to make an appearance of many, as in a mimic theatre of war. At once to have recovered Azimghur and Jaunpore, from which we had been so ignominiously expelled, would have been a great stroke; and the Commissioner wrote to Lord Canning, saying that if the Government would allow him to divert two hundred Europeans from the main line of operations, the magistrates and other civil officers might return to their posts, and British authority might be re-established. But troops could not be spared for the purpose, and it was left to another day and to other means, whereof due record will be made hereafter, to prove to the people of those districts that the English had not been swept out of the land. The narrative must now follow the upward line of the Ganges to the next great city of note.

Allahabad. About seventy miles beyond Benares, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, lies the city of Allahabad. It has none of that wealth of structural beauty which renders Benares so famous among the cities of the East. Its attractions are derived chiefly from its position, at the extreme point or promontory of the Doab, formed by the meeting of the waters. The broad rivers rushing down towards the sea, and mingling as they go their streams of varied colour and varied motion—the one of yellow-brown, thick and turbid, the other blue, clear, and sparkling* —the green banks between which they flow, the rich cultivation of the inner country dotted with groves and villages, make a landscape pleasant to the eye. But the town itself, principally situated on the Jumna, has little to command admiration. It has been called in derision by natives of Hindostan, "Fukeerabad," or the city of beggars; but the Fort, which towers above it, massive and sublime, with the strength of many ages in its solid masonry, imparts peculiar dignity to the place. Instinct with the historical traditions of the two elder dynasties, it had gathered new power from the hands of the English conqueror, and, garrisoned by English troops, might almost have defied the world.

1857. June.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the military importance of the situation at the junction of the two rivers, commanding, as it does, the great fluvial thoroughfare of Hindostan, and also the high road by land from the Upper to the Lower Provinces. Both in a strategical and political sense, its security had ever been of great moment; but the recent acquisition of Oude had rendered it still more essential that it should be safely in hand. In this powerful fortress of Allahabad was an arsenal stored with all the munitions of war, and an array of guns in position

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* Historians and poets alike delight to describe the meeting of the waters. "The half-modernised fortress," says Trotter, "looks grandly down on the meeting of the clearer Jumna with the yellow waters of the broad Ganges" (*History of the British Empire in India*); Waterfield (*Indian Ballads*) sings of "the sisters blue and brown;" and again, "Where Yamuna leaps blue to Ganga's arms." And Bholonauth Chunder (*Travels of a Hindoo*), writing in prose, but scarcely less poetically, says: "The spot where the Sister Nuddees (Greek Nyades) meet makes a magnificent prospect. The Ganges has a turbid, muddy current—the Jumna, a sparkling stream. Each at first tries to keep itself distinct, till, happy to meet after a long parting, they run into each other's embrace, and, losing themselves in one, flow in a common stream. The Ganges strikes the fancy as more matronly of the two—the Jumna a gayer, youthful sister."

1857. commanding the approaches from the country below. And their possession by the enemy would have been a disaster beyond compare. Some time before, Sir James Outram had suggested to Lord Canning the expediency of adopting measures for the greater security of Allahabad, and had warned him of the, at least possible, danger of such a mischance befalling us.* I do not know whether these warnings were remembered — warnings afterwards repeated most emphatically by Sir Henry Lawrence; but there was no place to which Lord Canning turned his thoughts with greater anxiety and alarm—no place to which he was more eager to send relief in the shape of European troops.

Tidings of the great disaster at Meerut reached Allahabad on the 12th of May, and a few days afterwards came the story of the progress of the rebellion, and the restoration of the Mogul Emperors of Delhi. At the beginning of May, the force posted at Allahabad consisted of a single Sepoy regiment, the Sixth, under the command of Colonel Simpson, which had marched in from Jummalpore at the latter end of March, relieving the Eleventh, under Colonel Finnes. But on the 9th, a wing of the Ferozpore Regiment of Sikhs had arrived from Mirzapore; and ten days later two troops of Oude Irregular Horse came in, under orders from Sir Henry Lawrence, to place themselves under the civil authorities. Shortly afterwards sixty European invalids were brought in from Chunar. The bulk of the Native troops occupied their Lines in the Cantonment, which lay at a distance of two or three miles from the Fort between the two great rivers.

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* "I myself am more shocked than surprised," he wrote from Baghdad to the Chairman of the East India Company, on first hearing of the outbreak, "for I have long dreaded something of the sort; and you may recollect I told you of the warning that I gave to Lord Canning when I was last at Calcutta, and suggested that measures should be adopted for the better security of Allahabad."—*June* 8, 1857. *MS.*

Detachments were posted in the Fort. The principal civil officers were Mr. Chester, the commissioner, and Mr. Court, the magistrate—both men of courage and resolution, not easily shaken or disturbed. They and the other civilians, as well as the military officers, dwelt in comfortable and pleasant garden-houses in the European station, without an anxious thought of the future to disturb them.

Colonel Simpson and the Sixth.

In the eyes of the commanding officer, and, indeed, of every Englishman who held a commission under him, the Sixth was true to the core, and was thoroughly to be trusted. It was one of those regiments in which the officers looked lovingly on their soldiers as on their children; cared for their comforts, promoted their amusements, and lived amongst them as comrades. They had done so much for their men, and seen so many indications of what at least simulated gratitude and affection, that it would have been to their discredit if they had mistrusted a regiment which had such good reason to be faithful to the English gentlemen who had treated them with the kindness of parents. But the civil officers, who had none of the associations and the sympathies which made the centurions of the Sixth Regiment ever willing to place their lives in the hands of the native soldiery, saw everywhere grounds of suspicion and causes of alarm. There was evidently a wide-spread feeling of mistrust both in the City and in the Cantonment.* All kinds of vague reports were in the

State of popular feeling.

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* Mr. Willock, joint magistrate, says in his official report, "As each day passed some fresh rumour was circulated regarding the state of public feeling in the city. Agents of the rebel leaders were evidently busy poisoning the minds of the people. . . . The Bazaar was closed, and it was very evident that an outbreak in the city would follow an émeute of the soldiery. The men of the city warned the magistrate against the infidelity of the Sepoys, and the Sepoys cautioned their officers against the city people, protesting against the tales that had been circulated of their lukewarmness towards Government."

1857. air. Whether the disturbing faith had grown up spontaneously in the minds of the Natives, or whether the great lie had been maliciously propagated by active emissaries of evil, it was believed that a heavy blow was to be struck at the religion of the people.* At one time it was reported that the English had determined to serve out the greased cartridges on a given day, and that the regiment would be paraded on the glacis of the Fort, in a position commanded by our guns, and blown into the air if they disobeyed orders. Then it was said that the Sepoys had determined to prevent the treasure being moved into the Fort;† and again, that the Sikhs were conspiring with the Native Infantry for a joint attack upon the English. At the same time, the price of grain and of other kinds of food rose in the market, and the common feeling of disquietude was enhanced by the discontent occasioned by the dearness of provisions, which was always attributed to the agency of the English.

May 22. Conflicting projects. In this state of uncertainty, Colonel Simpson proposed to betake himself with his regiment to the Fort. This movement was strenuously opposed by Mr. Court, the magistrate, and the project was abandoned.

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* I have remarked, and with much uniformity of observation, that these monstrous reports of "forcible conversion," or destruction of caste, were most rife where the Mahomedan population was the densest. Allahabad contained an unusual number of Mussulmans, whilst in Benares there was a great preponderance of Hindoos; but these reports appear to have been circulated more freely in the former than in the latter city.

† It was said that this ought to have opened the eyes of Colonel Simpson to the real state of his corps. But the fact is, that the circumstance referred to in the text was nothing more than an alleged conversation between a Native officer of the Irregular Cavalry and another of the Sixth. The former was said to have asked whether the Sixth would allow the treasure to be removed, and the latter to have answered, "Some of them would not until they had received their arrears of pay." "This," says Colonel Simpson, "was immediately reported to the Adjutant, who did not credit it. On the 23rd I made poor Plunkett and Stewart inquire into the business, and the latter reported to me there was no truth in it, as the Native officer and men of the Sixth guard denied the accusation."

On the same evening a council of the leading civil and military officers was held, and it was determined that the women and children only should be removed next morning into the Fort. But next morning, before daybreak, there was a change of plan. The order, which had decreed that "no (adult) male should be allowed to enter the Fort," was cancelled, in spite of Court's remonstrances, and two hours before noon "there was a regular flight to the Fort of men, women, and children, carrying with them all the property they could."* But later in the day the energy of the magistrate prevailed, and the non-military members of the community were enrolled into a volunteer guard, to patrol the city and station, accompanied by some mounted police. 1857. May 22.

As the month wore on to its close, appearances seemed rather to improve. Some apprehensions had been entertained lest the great Mahomedan festival of the *Eed*, which was to be celebrated on the 25th, should stir all the inflammatory materials gathered together in Allahabad into a blaze. The day, however, passed over without any disturbance; and at a parade held in the evening, two Sepoys, who, on the preceding day, had given up a couple of Mehwattees, charged with tampering with their fidelity, were May 25. Lip-loyalty.

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* Official Report of Mr. Fendall Thompson, officiating magistrate. Colonel Simpson, in a narrative of events with which he has furnished me, says, "On the 23rd of May, the ladies, children, and non-military were ordered into the Fort for security, in consequence of the various reports received by the magistrate regarding the unsettled state of the city of Allahabad, aggravated by the high price of grain." It might be gathered from this that the magistrate had approved of the removal to the Fort of the non-military males, whereas the official report states that he had in reality protested against it. Colonel Simpson, however, says, in another memorandum, that "a notice to this effect" (*i.e.* the removal of "ladies, children, and non-military".) "was circulated by the magistrate throughout the station, and regimentally by two of his sowars." Colonel Simpson says that it was signed both by himself and Court.

1857. May 25. publicly promoted.* But this spasm of energy seems to have been designed only to throw dust into the eyes of the authorities. It is stated that, at the very same time, they were intriguing with the Oude Cavalry. Perhaps the arrest was designed to irritate the minds of the people of the city. If so, it was a successful movement; for it was soon noised abroad that a rescue would be attempted, and so the prisoners were removed to the Fort.

After this there were outward quietude and security, for although with the new month there arose increased excitement in the city, still more favourable appearances presented themselves in the cantonment. The Sepoys of the Sixth, seemingly not satisfied with the latent loyalty of quiescence, quickened into energy and enthusiasm, and demanded to be led against the rebels of Delhi. News of their noble offer was promptly telegraphed to Calcutta, and Lord Canning sent back by the wires a cordial expression of the thanks of Government. But to the civilians at least it was apparent that the danger was not passed, for every day the excitement became greater in the city.

News from Benares, June 4. Affairs were in this state when news came from Benares that the Sepoys stationed there had risen in revolt, and that they had been dispersed by Neill's Europeans. The telegraph brought the first tidings to Simpson, who, as an initial measure of precaution, issued orders that the gates of the Fort should be closed night and day, and no one, of whatsoever

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* Sir John Malcolm writes of the Mehwattees, that, "although usually reckoned Mahomedans, it is difficult to say whether they are Mahomedans or Hindoos; they partake of both religions, and are the most desperate rogues in India. They are turbulent, vindictive, cunning, cruel, robbers, murderers, and assassins—yet they are faithful, undaunted guards and servants to those whose nimuk (salt) they eat."—*Malwa Report*, p. 578, *note*.

1857. June 4.

colour or creed, admitted without a passport.* The next step was to guard the approaches to Allahabad. The road from Benares ran on the other side of the Ganges, which was crossed by a bridge of boats at a point nearly opposite to the Fort, to the suburb of Darao-gunj. It seemed to be so certain that the Benares mutineers would make for Allahabad, that, on a requisition of the Magistrate, a Company of the Sixth was sent, with two guns, to defend the bridge by which the passage of the river must have been made. At the same time, a detachment of the Oude Irregular Cavalry was posted on an open space between the bridge-head and the cantonment, so as to command all the approaches to the latter. And no one then seemed to doubt that those Native guards would defend the bridge and the station as staunchly and as truly as if the insurgents had been people of other races and other creeds.

It will, perhaps, never be known to the full satisfaction of the historical inquirer whether the Sixth Regiment was saturated with that deepest treachery which simulates fidelity for a time, in order that it may fall with more destructive force on its unsuspecting victim, or whether it had been, throughout the month of May, in that uncertain, wavering condition which up to the moment of the final outburst has no determined plan of operations. The officers of the regiment believed that the men were staunch to the core. Outwardly, there were no indications of

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* "From this period (May 25) until the 4th of June more or less excitement prevailed in the city of Allahabad, and on that date the mutiny at Benares took place, and was reported to me by telegraphic wire. On the same evening I ordered the Fort Gates to be closed, day and night, and neither European nor Native was allowed ingress or egress without a pass, so as more particularly to guard against any tamperers from Benares or from the city of Allahabad."—*Memorandum by Colonel Simpson. MS.*

1857. June 6.

hostility. But when news came that the Native regiments at Benares had risen, and that the Europeans had fallen upon them, the long-abiding vacillation rose into robust resolution, and the regiment sprung, as it were, in a moment upon its prey. Whether it was in a wild panic of fear, believing that Neill and the Europeans would soon be upon them, or whether in the belief that the time for action had now come, as they would probably soon be joined by the Sepoys from Benares, the evening of the 6th of June found them ripe for any deed of violence.

But even as the sun was setting on that day—the last sun that ever was to set upon this model regiment—there was unbroken faith in its fidelity. The warning voice, however, was not silent. The Adjutant of the Sixth received a letter from a non-commissioned officer of the regiment, telling him that the news from Benares had caused much excitement in the Lines. The Adjutant took the letter to the Colonel. But Simpson could not admit that anything was wrong. He added, however, that at the sunset parade, which was to be held for the promulgation of the thanks of the Governor-General to the regiment, the temper of the men would be clearly ascertained.

The Thanksgiving Parade.

The parade was held. The thanks of the Governor-General were read. The Commissioner, who had attended at the request of the Colonel, addressed the regiment in Hindostanee, praising them for the loyalty they had evinced. The Sepoys appeared to be in the highest spirits; and they sent up a ringing cheer in response to the stirring words. When the parade was over, the officers, for the most part, rode or walked to the Mess. With Colonel Simpson rode Captain Plunkett—an officer of the Sixth, who had served for more than twenty years with the regiment. He spoke with delight of the pride he felt in its noble conduct, and his faith in its enduring fidelity. Thus conversing they rode to the Mess-house, where other officers had assembled, and were discussing the events of the day. Among them was Captain Birch, the Fort-Adjutant, who besought the Colonel to recall the guns posted at the Bridge of Boats and to post them in the Fort, where they were more needed. To this, Simpson esteeming the Fort to be his first charge, and having been warned not to trust the Sikhs, of whom the garrison mainly consisted, gave his consent; and orders went forth for their recall.*

1857.
June 6.

The last Mess-dinner of the Sixth.

There was a goodly gathering in the Mess-house, for the number of officers had been recently increased by the arrival of a party of young cadets, who had been ordered to do duty with the Sixth—mere boys, with the roses of England on their cheeks and the kisses of their mothers still fresh upon their lips. Without any sense of ills to come, old and young took their places at the dinner-table in perfect serenity of mind. There was at least one faithful regiment in the service! The civilians, equally assured, went to their houses and dined; and did as was their wont in the evening, wrapped themselves up in early slumber, or kept themselves awake with the excitement of cards. Some, indeed, who had slept in the Fort on the preceding night, were now again in their own homes. On no evening, perhaps, since the first startling news had come from Delhi and Meerut, had there been so little trepidation—so little excitement. But about nine o'clock the whole

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* These warnings came from Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow and Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore. Simpson was advised not to trust the Sikhs, and to man the Fort with all the Europeans available at Allahabad.

1857. June 6.

European community of Allahabad were startled by the sound of a bugle-call announcing the alarm. The Colonel had left the Mess, and was walking homewards, when the unexpected sound smote upon his ears and urged him onward to his house, where he called for his horse, mounted, and rode for the quarter-guard. Thither many other officers had repaired on the first sound of the bugle-notes. The truth was soon apparent to them. The faithful Sixth had revolted.

Revolt of the Regiment.

The story was this: The detachment sent to defend the Bridge had been the first to rise, as it had been first to learn how the guns had been turned upon the Native troops at Benares, and whilst Simpson with his officers was dining comfortably at the Mess-house, the orders, which he had despatched for the withdrawal of the Artillery from Darao-gunj, had been sternly resisted. The Sepoy Guard, told off as an escort, rose against the Artillery-officer, Lieutenant Harward, and declared that the guns should be taken not to the Fort, but to the Cantonment; and the rest of the detachment turned out, armed and accoutred, to enforce the demand. True to the noble regiment to which he belonged, Harward hastened to the post of the Oude Irregulars, which lay between the Bridge-head and the Cantonment, to bring up succours to overawe the Sepoys and to save the guns. The Irregulars were commanded by Lieutenant Alexander—a young officer of the highest promise—who at once responded to Harward's call, and ordered out his men. Tardily and sulkily they pretended to obey. Whilst they were forming, a hastily-written note was despatched by Harward to the Fort. The sound of the guns, grating along the road to Cantonments, was distinctly heard; and the Irregu-

1857. June 6.

lars, headed by Alexander and accompanied by Harward, whom the former had mounted on a spare horse, then rode out to intercept the mutineers. They soon came upon the party, under the broad light of the moon; but when the order was given to charge the guns, and the English officers dashed at them, only three troopers responded to the stirring summons. The rest fraternised with the enemy. Alexander, as he rode forward and was rising in his stirrups to strike, was shot through the heart, and Harward narrowly escaped with his life.* The mutineers, who had before sent out two of their party to warn their comrades, and had, it is stated, sent up signal rockets, now marched with the guns to the Lines, and when their colonel appeared on parade, the whole regiment was in the throes of rebellion.

Escape of Colonel Simpson.

It was then too late for the voice of authority to overawe or to persuade. Simpson saw that there was great excitement on the parade-ground. Some of his officers were commanding their men to fall in, but there was little appearance of obedience. And when he rode up to inquire why the guns had been brought on parade, two Sepoys of the Guard replied by firing upon him. Expostulation was vain. A volley of musketry responded to his words; and he saw that everywhere on the parade-ground the Sepoys were shooting down their officers. Seeing that there was no hope of saving the colours, he then rode to the left of the Lines, where some men of the Light

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* "During the night, the few Irregulars who had remained staunch came in, bringing with them the body of their officer, Lieutenant Alexander, who had been shot, as before related. His body bore witness to the mad cruelty of his enemies, for besides the shot in his breast, which killed him, were sabre-cuts all over his head and face."—*Mr. Thompson's Report.*

1857. June 6.

Company, in whom there still seemed to be a feeling of compunction, if not of regard for their chief, clustered, unarmed and unaccoutred, round his horse, and besought him to ride for his life to the Fort. Hoping still to save the Treasury, he rode, accompanied by Lieutenant Currie, in the direction of that building, but fired upon from all sides, he soon saw that the case was hopeless.* He had now well nigh run the gauntlet of danger, and though a ball had grazed his helmet, he had providentially escaped; but opposite the Mess-house, as he galloped towards the Fort, the Guard formed in line at the gate and fired upon him. A musket-ball took effect on his horse; but Simpson was still unhurt, save by a blow on the arm from a spent shot; and the last dying efforts of his charger landed him safely within the walls of the Fort, covered with the blood of the noble animal that had borne him.

Massacre of the Ensigns.

Meanwhile, others less fortunate had fallen beneath the musketry of the mutineers. Currie, who had accompanied the Colonel to the Treasury, escaped the fire of the guards and sentries; Captain Gordon and Lieutenant Hicks escaped also, as did two of the cadets, to the Fort;† but Plunkett, with his score years of good service in the Sixth, Adjutant Steward, Quartermaster Hawes, and Ensigns Pringle and Munro were shot down on parade. Fort-Adjutant Birch and Lieutenant Innes of the Engineers were also killed, and eight of the unposted boy-ensigns were murdered in cold blood by the insurgent Sepoys.* The poor boys were leaving the Mess-house, when the brutal soldiery fell upon them. Seven were slaughtered on the ground; but one, a boy of sixteen, escaped with his wounds, and hid himself in a ravine. Having supported himself for some days, merely, it would seem, by water from a brook, he was discovered in his hiding-place, dragged before one of the insurgent leaders, and confined in a serai with a Native catechist. The faith of the convert was giving way to the sufferings which he endured, when Arthur Cheek, who had been scarcely a month in India, exhorted his companion to be steadfast in the faith. "Oh, my friend," he is reported to have said, "whatever may come to us, do not deny the Lord Jesus." He was rescued, but he was not saved. On the 16th of June the poor boy died in the Fort from exposure, exhaustion, and neglected wounds.† 1857. June 6.

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* "As my duty was to save the Treasury, if possible, I proceeded in that direction, when I was immediately fired on by the whole guard of thirty-two men on one flank, with a night-picket of thirty men on the other. The detachment of the Third Oude Irregular Cavalry remained passive, and did not fire."—*Memorandum of Colonel Simpson. MS.*

† Hicks and the cadets (Pearson and Woodgate) were at the Daraogunj when the mutiny broke out. They were made prisoners and carried towards Cantonments, but, in their eagerness to join in the plunder of the Treasury, the Sepoys suffered them to depart, and afterwards they made good their escape by twice swimming across the river.

In the Fort. It was fortunate that the bulk of our people were shut up in the Fort, where no external perils could assail them. But there was danger within the walls. A company of the Sixth formed part of the garrison, and the temper of the Sikhs was doubtful. When the noise of firing was first heard it was believed that the Benares mutineers had arrived, and that the Sepoys of Allahabad were giving them a warm reception. But at a later hour the truth broke in upon them; and all doubt was removed by the appearance

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* It has been commonly stated that these poor boys were killed whilst sitting at the Mess-table. I am assured, however, on the best authority that this is a mistake. Few incidents of the mutiny have excited greater horror than this, which is familiarly spoken of as the massacre of the "poor little griffins."

† See Mr. Owen's Journal. It has been erroneously stated elsewhere that he died in the hands of the enemy, on the day of Neill's arrival at Allahabad, the 11th of June.

1857. June 6. of the Commandant Simpson, smeared with the blood of his wounded charger. His first care was to order the Sepoys of the Sixth to be disarmed. This duty was entrusted to a detachment of the Sikh corps, under Lieutenant Brasyer—an officer who had won for himself a commission by his gallantry in the great battles of the Punjab, and who now proved his mastery over his men by forcing them to do a distasteful service. With the news that the Benares Sepoys of the Regular Army had been mown down by the white troops, came also tidings that Gordon's regiment had been riddled by our grape-shot. It was, therefore, fearfully probable that the offended nationality of the Sikhs at Allahabad would rise against their Christian masters, partly in revenge and partly in fear. Happily the treasure was outside the Fort. Had the design of bringing it within the walls not been abandoned, the love of loot and the thirst of blood would have prevailed together, and Allahabad might have been lost.

It was, in truth, a most critical moment. Had the men of the Sixth Regiment and the Sikhs then in the Fort made common cause with each other, the little Christian garrison could have made but feeble resistance against such odds. The Sepoys, who were posted, for purposes of defence, at the main-gate, had, on the first sound of firing in Cantonments, been ordered to load their pieces: so they were ready for immediate action. The Sikhs were drawn up fronting the main-gate, and before them were the guns, manned by the invalid Artillerymen from Chunar, in whom the energy of earlier days was revived by this unexpected demand upon them. And at a little distance, in overawing position, were posted little knots of European volunteers, armed and loaded, ready on the first sign of resistance to fire down from the ramparts upon the mutineers. There is something very persuasive always in the lighting of port-fires, held in the steady hands of English Artillerymen. The Sepoys, charged to the brim with sedition, would fain have resisted the orders of the white men, but these arrangements thoroughly overawed them. They sullenly piled arms at the word of command, and were expelled from the Fort to join their comrades in rebellion. 1857. June 6.

The first danger was now surmounted. Those who knew best what was passing in the minds of the Native soldiery of all races, clearly saw the magnitude of the crisis. It is impossible to over-estimate the disastrous consequences that would have ensued from the seizure and occupation by the enemy of the Fortress of Allahabad, with all its mighty munitions of war. One officer, however, was prepared at any risk to prevent this catastrophe by precipitating another. Stimulated, perhaps, by the noble example set by Willoughby at Delhi, Russell, of the Artillery, laid trains of gunpowder from the magazines to a point, at which he stood during the disarming of the Sixth, near the loaded guns; and if mutiny had then been successful, he would have fired the trains and blown the magazines, with all the surrounding buildings, into the air.* The expulsion of the Hindostanee Sepoys, effected by Brasyer's cool courage and admirable management, averted for the moment this great calamity; and all that was left undone, did itself afterwards by the help of the national character of the Sikhs.

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* I first read this anecdote in Mr. Clive Bayley's Official Report. Mr. Bayley has stated the fact on the authority of Mr. Court, the magistrate, whose testimony is not to be questioned.

1857. June 6. Rising in the City.

Such was the mutiny of the Sixth Regiment—in its purely military aspects one of the most remarkable in the whole history of the war, and, memorable in itself, still more memorable for its immediate popular results. For the great city rose in an instant. The suburbs caught the contagion of rebellion; far into the rural districts the pestilence spread, and order and authority lay prostrate and moribund. If a general rising of the people had been skilfully planned and deliberately matured, there could not, to all outward appearance, have been a more simultaneous or a more formidable insurrection. But, in truth, there was no concert, no cohesion. Every man struck for himself. In not one of the great cities of India was there a more varied population than in Allahabad. But there was a greater preponderance than is often seen of the Mahomedan element. And it was a perilous kind of Mahomedanism; for large numbers of the ancient dependents of decayed Mogul families were cherishing bitter memories of the past, and writhing under the universal domination of the English. The dangerous classes, indeed, were many, and they seem to have been ripe for revolt on the first sign of the rising of the soldiery. So, whilst the events above recorded were passing in the Fort, in the city and in the station were such tumult and confusion as had never been known before. All through the night of the 6th of June licence and rapine had full sway. The gaol was broken open, and the prisoners released. Vast numbers of convicted criminals, with the irons still rattling on their limbs, rushed forth, to the consternation of the peaceful inhabitants, to turn their newly-acquired liberty to account in the indulgence of all the worst passions of humanity. To the English station they made their way in large bodies, shouting

1857. June 6.

and yelling as they went; and every European or Eurasian who crossed their path was mercilessly butchered on the spot. The houses of the Christian inhabitants were plundered; and the flames from our burning bungalows soon lit up the skies and proclaimed to many in the Fort that their pleasant homes would soon be only heaps of ashes. And there was a mighty pillage in the quarters of the Christian shopkeepers and the wharfs and warehouses of the steam companies. The railway-works were destroyed.* The telegraphic wires were torn down. All our people outside the Fort were ruthlessly put to death by the insurgents, and it has been said with every possible aggravation of cruelty. All the turbulent population of the great city turned out to glut their vengeance against the Feringhees, or to gratify their insatiate thirst for plunder. And with them went not only the Sepoys, who, a day before, had licked our hands, but the superannuated pensioners of the Company's Native Army, who, though feeble for action were blatant in council, and were earnest in their efforts to stimulate others to deeds of cowardice and cruelty.† Law and authority were, for a while, prostrate in the dust; whilst over the

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* There seemed to be an especial rage against the Railway and the Telegraph. How far it was the growth of the superstitious feelings glanced at in the first volume of this work (pp. 190, *et seq.*), I do not venture to declare. There was apparently a great fear of the engines, for the insurgents brought the guns to bear upon them and battered them to pieces, some appearing to be afraid of approaching them as though they were living monsters.

† See the Red Pamphlet. The author states that he gives facts "from an undoubted source"—one who received them "from the lips of an eye-witness." "Houses were plundered and burnt," he says, "their inmates chopped to pieces, some roasted, almost all cruelly tortured, the children tossed on bayonets. Foremost in the commission of these atrocities were the pensioners. . . . . These men, unable from their infirmities to fight, were not thereby precluded from inflicting tortures of the most diabolical nature. They even took the lead in these villanies, and encouraged the Sepoys and others to follow their example."

1857. June 6. Cotwallee, or head-quarters of the city police, the green flag of the Prophet declared the supremacy of Mahomedan rule.

Nor was it only against the white-faced Europeans and the Christian people of the half-blood that the fury of the disaffected was at this time levelled. In some quarters of Allahabad were a large number of quiet settlers from the plains of Bengal, and many others drawn thither by the exigencies of their religion—peaceful pilgrims to the sacred Pryag. If to be a Bengallee were not at that time held in the North-Western Provinces to be the next thing to a Christian, it was at least known that he was an unwarlike, feeble personage, likely to have money in his possession, and small means of defending it. Upon these harmless people the "budmashes" fell heavily, and established a reign of terror among them. Their property was seized, their lives were threatened, and only spared by abject promises to disgorge the savings of a life, and to swear allegiance to the restored Government of the Mogul.*

June 7. To sack the Treasury was commonly the first thought of the insurgents, alike of military mutineers and criminals from the streets and bazaars. But the coin lay untouched during the night under a Sepoy guard, and the first impulses of personal greed were restrained by some feeling of nationality which had found entrance into their breasts, though only on the briefest tenure. It was agreed that the treasure should be carried in its integrity by the regiment to Delhi, and laid, with their services, at the feet of the King. The spasm of self-devotion seems to have ended with the night. In the morning the Sepoys of the Sixth are said to have assembled on the parade-ground, and to have voted for the repudiation of this patriotic scheme. Soon after noon they went to the Treasury, opened its doors, and began to serve out the money-bags. Each Sepoy took as many rupees as he could carry, and when the whole had satisfied themselves, they left what remained to the predatory classes, convicted and unconvicted, of the city. Then there was very little more thought of the national cause, of Delhi, or of Behaudur Shah. As a regiment the Sixth disbanded itself, and each soldier, carrying his spoil, set out for his native village. But the spirit of rapine had been roused in all the adjacent country; and there were many who, in the absence of white-faced fugitives, were by no means reluctant to plunder the black. And it is suspected that very few of the Sepoys, carrying off an ample provision for the remainder of their lives, ever lived to spend the money in the ease and dignity of their native homes.*

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* "The Bengallees cowered in fear, and awaited within closed doors to have their throats cut. The women raised a dolorous cry at the near prospect of death. From massacring their officers, and plundering the Treasury, and letting open the gaol-birds, the Sepoys spread through the town to loot the inhabitants. Our friend, as well as his other neighbours, were soon eased of all their valuables, but were spared their lives, on promise of allegiance to their (the Native) Government."—*Travels of a Hindoo, by Bholonauth Chunder.*

1857.
June 7.

Rebellion in the Districts.

It is supposed that many, escaping towards Oude, perished in the Gangetic villages not far from the city. For as at Benares, so at Allahabad, the peasantry rose at once under their old Talookhdars, who had been dispossessed by the action of our law-courts; and there was anarchy in the rural districts. The auction purchasers—absentee proprietors—dwelt principally in the city, and the ryots had no sympathy with them. For their own sakes they were eager but

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* It is said that about thirty lakhs of rupees (about 300,000*l.*) were in the Allahabad Treasury, and that every Sepoy carried off three or four bags, each containing a thousand rupees (100*l.*)

1857. June 7. feeble supporters of Government; all the muscle and sinew of the agricultural races were arrayed against us. Indeed, it soon became painfully apparent to the British authorities that the whole country was slipping away from them. For not only in the districts beyond the Ganges, but in those lying between the two rivers, the rural population had risen. The landowners there were principally Mahomedans, and ready to join any movement which threatened to drive the English from the land. It was there, too, in the Doab that Brahminism was most powerfully enthroned. The point where the Ganges and the Jumna meet, known as the Pryag, is one of peculiar sanctity in the estimation of Hindoos, and the Priesthood, therefore, were strong in numbers and in influence. The gathering of the pilgrims was a source of wealth to them, and they believed that if the supremacy of the English were overthrown their gains would be greater and their power on the ascendant. So these "Pryag-wallahs" stirred up the Hindoo population of the Doab; and soon there was scarcely a man of either faith who was not arrayed against us. But on the further bank of the Jumna affairs were more propitious. There were incidental risings, plunderings and burnings of villages, but more on the surface than on the Ganges or in the Doab. For it happened that some powerful Rajahs, whose interest it was to maintain order, either sided with the English or maintained a discreet neutrality whilst the tumult was at its worst, and rose up to aid us when the star of our fortune again began to ascend.*

The Rajahs of Manda, Ditrya, and Barra.

The Moulavee.

After the lapse of a few days, the first orgies of crime being over, and there being nothing more to plunder and little more to destroy, the universal rapine, with all its distractions and confusions and internecine conflicts, began to take a more consistent shape, and something like an organised rebellion arose in its place. There was a man known as the "Moulavee," around whom the insurgent population gathered, as he proclaimed the restored rule of the Emperor of Delhi. Whence he sprung few people at the time could say. But it was known at a later period that he came from one of the Mahomedan villages in the Doab, which had gone into rebellion. Making great pretensions to sanctity, and investing himself with the character of a prophet as well as of a ruler of men, he stimulated the dormant fanaticism of the people, and roused them to array themselves against the Feringhees. Establishing his head-quarters in the Chusroo Bagh—a spacious walled garden, in which were some tombs, held in high veneration—he simulated the possession of miraculous powers, by some obvious trickeries, which deluded his excited followers, and for awhile he was recognised as Governor of Allahabad. It little mattered who or what he was, so long as he was strong in his hatred of the English, and could induce the Mussulman population to believe that the Mahomedan dynasty would soon be restored. So for a little time he succeeded in setting up the likeness of a provisional government, and the name of the Moulavee was on the lips of all the followers of the Prophet. Telling them that the Book of Fate declared the speedy extinction of the white race in India, he urged his people, day after day, to attack the Fort; but, though they made sundry demonstrations, they kept at a discreet distance from our guns.*

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* See Mr. Fendall Thompson's Official Narrative.

1857.
June 7.

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* Some of the cotemporary accounts state that it was difficult to trace either the name or origin of the Moulavee, and my later investigations have not thrown much light upon the subject.* From a high civil authority, who had the best opportunity of ascertaining the history of

1857. June 7. Reinforcements from below.

But this state of things was not to be suffered much longer to endure. The man, who, by his timely energy, had saved Benares, was now pushing on for the rescue of Allahabad. The one true soldier that was needed to put forth a strong hand to smite down the growing rebellion in the Gangetic Provinces was hurrying upwards, with a little band of English fighting men, to show that the national manhood of the country had lost nothing of the might that had enabled it to establish the empire of the Few in the vast territories of the Many. Having sent forward an advanced party of the Fusiliers, under Lieutenant Arnold, and made over the command of Benares to Colonel Gordon, Neill left that place with another party of his regiment, and pressed on by horse-dawk to Allahabad. Arnold had reached the Bridge of Boats on the 7th, but he had been unable at once to cross, as the passage was held by the mutineers, and there had been some delay in sending a steamer to bring them across the river to the Fort. Their arrival did something to establish confidence in the garrison, but the news that Neill was coming did still more. The old high spirit of self-reliance had never waned; and it was still felt that a handful of European soldiers under a commander, with a clear head and a stout heart, might hold Allahabad against the whole world of mutiny and rebellion.

June 9.

the man, I can learn only that "he was not known in the district before the mutiny," and was "said to be an emissary from Lucknow." The best account that I can find is that given by Mr. Willock in his official report. "At this time," he says, "the city and suburbs were held by a body of rebels under the now well-known Moulavee Lyakut Ali. This man, a weaver by caste, and by trade a schoolmaster, had gained some respect in his village by his excessive sanctity; and on the first spread of the rebellion, the Mahomedan Zemindars of Pergunnah Chail, ready to follow any leader, placed this man at their head, and marched to the city, proclaiming him Governor of the district in the name of the King of Delhi."

1857. June 11. Arrival of Neill.

On the 11th of June Neill arrived. As he entered the gates of the Fort, the Sentry exclaimed, "Thank God, sir, you'll save us yet!" Lord Canning, who saw clearly that he had now at his disposal one of the men most wanted in such a crisis, had commissioned the electric wires to instruct the Colonel of the Madras Fusiliers to take command at Allahabad; and Neill had hastened upwards, under the burning heats of June, with a disregard for self, which well nigh cost him his life.* He had obtained entrance into the Fort, not without great personal risk; and only the indomitable will within him kept him from succumbing to the fierce rays of the noon-day sun. For some time after his arrival he could sustain himself only by continually lying down and drinking large quantities of champagne and water. But he never for a moment doubted his capacity to grapple successfully with the difficulties before him; whatsoever might be his physical prostration, he had no mental shortcomings, no deterring sense of responsibility to enervate and arrest him. "I had always the greatest confidence in myself," he wrote at this time to the partner of his life; "and although I felt almost dying from complete exhaustion, yet I kept up my heart." Whatever the conjuncture might be, it was the nature of the man to rise to the height of the occasion—"to scorn the consequence and to do the thing." He had long been looking for an opportunity, and, now that it had come, he was not one to succumb to the assaults of bodily weakness, and to

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* "I was quite done up by my dash from Benares, and getting into the Fort in that noonday heat. I was so exhausted for days, that I was obliged to lie down constantly. I could only sit up for a few minutes at a time, and when our attacks were going on, I was obliged to sit down in the batteries and give my orders and directions.... For several days I drank champagne and water to keep me up."—*Letter from Colonel Neill to his Wife. MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June 11. halt with the goal before him. He was not a "Sepoy officer," and he had neither any credulity nor any tenderness to deter him from striking root-and-branch at the black soldiery who had betrayed us, and the people who were rising into rebellion on the ruins of the Native Army.

He took in the position of affairs at a glance. On his way from Benares, he had seen that the whole country on the banks of the Ganges was in a state of anarchy and confusion, and he knew that already the rising had become something more than a military mutiny.* At Allahabad, his first thought was, that it was a wonderful interposition of Providence that the Fortress was still in our hands. "How the place has not fallen," he wrote, "that is, not been taken by the Sikhs, is a wonder. They appear to be petted and made much of. The enemy are all around us; we are kept within the Fort. I shall settle that part of it ere long." And he did settle it. The Fort had been invested and menaced by the enemy. Neill's first impulse was to prove that the English could do more than defend themselves. June 12. Offensive operations. On the morning after his arrival, he opened fire from the Fort guns on the village of Darao-gunj, which was held by a large body of insurgent rabble, and then sent forward to the attack detachments of Fusiliers and Sikhs, who cleared the village, burnt it, and regained possession of the bridge, which Neill afterwards repaired. A further detachment of a hundred men of the Fusiliers came up on that day, under the command of Major

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* "June 10. The tone and bearing of the Native officials bad—evidently a good deal of plundering—villages burning in all directions—the country almost deserted—plundered by the Zemindars about. The revenues just about to be collected—the toll-house on road to Sydabad plundered—nearly destroyed—the body of the murdered man, an European, in the house; his daughter said to be taken off by a neighbouring Zemindar." — *Neill's Journal. MS.*

Stephenson, and passed over without interruption to the Fort. 1857. June 12—14.

Neill now felt himself strong enough for any emergency. The first suggestion of this increased strength was the removal of the Sikhs from the Fort. In truth, they were fast demoralising our own people in the garrison. They had been going in and out revelling in the pillage, and the Volunteers had been by no means behind them in predatory activity, especially in the direction of the "six dozen cases" of strong drink. The stores of the European merchants and the go-downs of the river steam-companies, with all their undelivered consignments, had been plundered; and beer, wines, and spirits were as plentiful as water in the Fort. The Sikhs brought in large supplies of liquor of all kinds, drank what they could, and sold the rest to the Europeans. The finest champagnes of Clicquot and Perrier-Jouet, and the best brandies of Martel and Hennessey, were selling for sixpence a bottle. So a reign of intoxication commenced which, for a while, subverted all military authority, and made us as helpless as children. This was an enemy for which Neill was not prepared; but his clear brain soon discerned the means of meeting and subduing it. He directed the Commissariat Officers to purchase, at the prices asked by the Sikhs, all the liquor remaining in their hands, and to lodge it securely in the Government stores. This done, the removal of the Sikhs to quarters outside the Fort was comparatively easy; but it was not to be done by force. He had taken counsel with Brasyer and with the energetic Magistrate Court, and it had been determined that the characteristic greed of the Sikhs should still be stimulated by thoughts of the plunder of some of the rebel zemindarrees. So they were

Removal of the Sikhs from the Fort.

1857. June 15. persuaded to take up a position in some old Government buildings outside the Fort, commanded by the guns on its ramparts.

Attack on the Insurgents. Having thus overcome the difficulties which lay in his path, Neill addressed himself earnestly to the work before him—the dispersal of the rebels and the restoration of order. On the 15th of June, having sent off the Christian women and children in a river steamer to Calcutta, he turned his available resources to the best account, and made an impression on the enemy, which greatly disheartened and enfeebled them. Having directed the guns of the Fort to open upon the villages or suburbs of Kydgunj and Moolegunj, he sent Harward, with a howitzer and a party of volunteer riflemen on board a steamer, to operate from the river, and marched a detachment of Fusiliers, Sikhs, and Irregular Cavalry upon the villages, with orders to scour them thoroughly and penetrate into the country beyond. The land party met with stalwart opposition, but the rush of the Sikhs was irresistible. They swept through the villages, and such was the terror that our demonstration on that day inspired, that when night fell, the Insurgent leaders sought safety in flight, and deserted the guns, which they had taken from us, and the prisoners whom they had captured at the commencement of the outbreak; and among them was young Cheek, of whose fate I have already spoken, and who was rescued only to die.*

The aspect of affairs now began rapidly to improve. "On the 17th the Magistrate proceeded to the Cotwallee, and there restored his own authority and installed his own officers." "No resistance," it is added, "was offered, and the whole place seemed deserted."* A terrible rumour had been running through the streets of Allahabad. It had been reported that the English in the Fort were about to bombard the city. What was the origin of the story it is hard to say. It may have grown up, as other rumours grew up, in the hotbed of a people's fears; or it may have been propagated by those whose interest it was to sweep out the insurgents.† But from whatsoever source it sprung, it was almost magical in its effects. Nothing that the Moulavee and his lieutenants could do to reassure the minds of the people had availed to allay the panic and restrain the flight, and before nightfall, on the day of Neill's victory, according to the Moulavee's own story, "not a house was tenanted, and not a light was to be seen in the city." Lyakut Ali himself had escaped towards Cawnpore.

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* The Allahabad volunteers showed great spirit and pluck, erring, however, on the side of exuberance. Neill complained bitterly that upon this occasion they had impeded his operations by "firing upon a herd of bullocks, and other madness"—bullocks at that time being as valuable as European soldiers. "These gentlemen volunteers," he characteristically added, "behave so lawlessly and insubordinately, that I have threatened to shoot or hang a few if they do not improve."

1857. June 17.

On the 18th, Neill marched out again with his whole force. Sending one detachment to attack the Pathan village of Derryabad and the Mehwattee villages of Syderbad and Russelpore, he led the main

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* Report of Mr. Fendall Thompson.

† The following is the Moulavee's account of the evacuation. "Some evil-minded men," he said, "who had sided with 'the accursed ones,' urged that for a time the Fort would be a safe retreat, and that if they would remain in it a few days longer, they (the evil-minded Natives) would contrive to spread abroad in the city fearful reports that the English were preparing the Artillery of the Fort to destroy the city, and that before dawn they would begin bombarding it with shot and shell. To show the sincerity of their advice, these men, with their followers, set off, giving out to all that they had left their houses and property to God's protection, and were going to save themselves by flight. On hearing this fearful report, the people, notwithstanding my repeated injunctions, commenced a precipitate flight, with their families and goods."—*Perwannah addressed by the Moulavee Lyakut Ali, apparently to the King of Delhi.—Supplement to Allahabad Official Narrative.*

1857. June 18. body into the city, which he found deserted, and afterwards halted them in the now-desolated cantonment on the old parade-ground of the Sixth. The fighting was now over. The work had been done. The English were masters, not merely of the Fort, but of the recovered city, and the European station from which they had been driven scarcely two weeks before. And now there lay before them the great question—the most difficult, perhaps, which soldiers and statesmen ever have the responsibility of solving—whether, after such convulsions as have been illustrated in these pages, true righteousness and true wisdom consisted in extending the hand of mercy and aiming at conciliation, or in dealing out a stern and terrible retribution. Our soldiers and statesmen in June, 1857, at Allahabad, solved the question in practice by adopting the latter course.

Retribution. Over the whole history of the Sepoy War—over the whole length and breadth of the country which witnessed its manifold horrors—there is no darker cloud than that which gathered over Allahabad in this terrible summer. It is an early chapter of the chronicle of the great conflict of races which I am now writing; and though foul crimes had even then been committed by our enemies, they were light in comparison with what were to come, and the retribution also was light.* Perhaps, however, the English-

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* It is to be observed, that at this time an impression was abroad that acts of barbarity had been committed, which were afterwards doubted, if not wholly disproved. I find the following in Neill's Journal, under date June 17, MS.: "A Sowar of Mr. Court's, named Syed Esau Ally, brought in for having joined the Moulavee and insurgents. Three witnesses saw him. He had served about twenty years. Direct his immediate execution by hanging. This is the sixth unfortunate wretch I have ordered for immediate death, a duty I never contemplated having

1857. June 18—30.

man had at this time a keener sense than afterwards possessed him of the humiliation which had been put upon his conquering race. Much of the anguish was in the novelty of the thing. The sting, though it struck deeper, was afterwards less severely felt, because the flesh had become indurated, and the nerves were more tensely strung. So it happened that whilst the first bitterness of our degradation—the degradation of fearing those whom we had taught to fear us—was still fresh upon our people, there came a sudden accession of stout English hearts and strong English hands, ready at once to punish and to awe. Martial Law had been proclaimed; those terrible Acts passed by the Legislative Council in May and June were in full operation; and soldiers and civilians alike were holding Bloody Assize, or slaying Natives without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. Afterwards, the thirst for blood grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General of India in Council, that "the aged, women, and children, are sacrificed,

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to perform. God grant I may have acted with justice. I know I have with severity, but under all the circumstances I trust for forgiveness. I have done all for the good of my country, to re-establish its prestige and power, and to put down this most barbarous, inhuman insurrection. The instances of refined cruelty, treachery, and the most brutal barbarity, are too numerous. One poor lady, Mrs. Macdonald, at Meerut, near her confinement, is brutally treated; has her nose, ears, hands, and breasts cut off, and at last has the child cut out of her. Mrs. Chambers, a beautiful young girl, only just come out married from home, at the same place, has her throat cut by a butcher. Miss Jennings and her father, a clergyman at Delhi, are both brutally murdered in the palace before the king, she, poor creature, subjected to the most unheard-of indignities and torture beforehand." I have already stated that Miss Jennings was murdered, not in the presence of the king, and that she was not outraged (*ante*, page 80). Mrs. Chambers was murdered, as is stated, by a butcher, and her murderer was hung (*ante*, page 69). I can find no evidence of the mutilations said to have been inflicted on Mrs. Macdonald. I have quoted this passage from Neill's Journal mainly to show that he had a strong religious sense of his responsibility, and that his executions were not as numerous as has been asserted.

1857. June 18—30.

as well as those guilty of rebellion."[*] They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages—perhaps now and then accidentally shot. Englishmen did not hesitate to boast, or to record their boastings in writing, that they had "spared no one," and that "peppering away at niggers" was very pleasant pastime, "enjoyed amazingly."[†] And it has been stated, in a book patronised by high official authorities, that "for three months eight dead-carts daily went their rounds from sunrise to sunset to take down the corpses which hung at the cross-roads and market-places," and that "six thousand beings" had been thus "summarily disposed of and launched into eternity."[‡]

I merely state these things. There are some questions so stupendous that human weakness may well leave it to the Almighty Wisdom to decide them. There is a dreadful story to be told in another chapter. God only knows whether what has been told in this contributed to the results to be presently recorded. But there is one great lesson to be learnt from the tragedies of Benares and Allahabad. It is the great lesson of Universal Toleration. An Englishman is almost suffocated with indignation when he reads that Mrs. Chambers or Miss Jennings was hacked to death by a dusky ruffian; but in Native histories, or, history being wanting, in Native legends and traditions, it may be recorded against our people, that mothers and wives and children, with less familiar names, fell miserable victims to the first swoop of English

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[*] Papers presented to Parliament, February 4, 1858, moved for by Mr. Vernon Smith, formerly President of the Board of Control, and signed H. D. Seymour.

[†] Ibid.

[‡] "Travels of a Hindoo" (Bholonauth Chunder), edited by Mr. Talboys Wheeler. See note in the Appendix. I believe the statement in the text to be an exaggeration, but such exaggerations are very significant.

1857. June 18—30.

vengeance; and these stories may have as deep a pathos as any that rend our own hearts. It may be, too, that the plea of provocation, which invests the most sanguinary acts of the white man in this deadly struggle with the attributes of righteous retribution, is not wholly to be rejected when urged in extenuation of the worst deeds of those who have never known Christian teaching.

Preparations for an advance.

Whilst Neill was thus re-establishing British authority at Allahabad, he was depressed by the thought of the danger surrounding his countrymen at Cawnpore and Lucknow, and eager to equip a force with the utmost possible despatch for the relief of those important posts. Men were available for the purpose, but means were wanting. The scarcity of provisions suitable to the English soldier, concerning which Mr. Tucker had written to Lord Canning, and which the Governor-General was taking prompt measures to rectify, was one great impediment to the desired movement. There was, too, a want of carriage. Large numbers of Commissariat bullocks had been collected for the service of the Army, but, on the first burst of the rebellion, the insurgents had swept them away, and of all the losses we sustained this was, perhaps, the most grievous. Then, too, there was a want of tents. There was a want of well nigh everything required by British troops in the worst part of the Indian summer, when the intolerable heat might any day be followed by deluging rains, which would quickly turn the baked earth into a great morass.

It was no fault of the Commissariat at this time that the arrangements progressed so slowly. Captain

1857. June 18—30.

Davidson, who was at the head of the department, did all that could be done to collect supplies and carriage; but the convulsions of the preceding fortnight had dispersed the people upon whom he would have relied for aid, and well nigh destroyed the resources of the place. Those who would have come forward as contractors at such a time, had fled in dismay—some from the violence of the insurgents, and some, in ignorant terror, from the anticipated retribution of the English—and many had returned to find themselves ruined. Property was destroyed. Industry was paralysed. The great incubus of fear pressed universally upon the trading classes. Whether more might have been done, at the commencement of the outbreak, to save the supplies then in hand—both the property of the Government and of private individuals—was not now the question. Davidson had to deal with things as they were, and it was not his fault that in the last week of June they did not wear a different complexion. Eager as Neill was to push forwards, he could not discern in this delayed departmental action any just ground of complaint. It was clear to him that the evil lay in the circumstances of his position, not in the incapacity of his agents.*

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* It is right that Neill's opinion on this subject should be stated in his own words. Great blame was cast on the Commissariat by cotemporary journalists, especially by the editor of the *Friend of India*, who published an article with the stinging title, "How Cawnpore was lost." Upon this Neill very generously wrote to Captain Davidson, saying: "The editor has certainly made a mistake in stating that your stores were outside. I understood that all we had was inside the Fort; and when I joined, and until the insurgents were cleared out of the place, the Commissariat were confined to the Fort entirely. The steamer Godowns had been gutted, the bazaar up to the walls of the Fort plundered, in the occupation of the enemy, your contractors driven away, and their property either plundered or not available for the service for some days after these insurgents had been driven away. It was no fault whatever of the Commissariat that it should have been reduced to the condition yours was, from being cut off from outside, and the dispersion of your people; but you had done all you could before the outbreak in

1857. June 18—30. The outbreak of Cholera.

And soon a greater evil befel him; for whilst he was waiting for means to equip the relieving force, Cholera swept down upon his troops and struck them with terrific suddenness. The intense heat of the weather, the constant exposure, the want of wholesome food, and the abundance of stimulating liquors, combined to facilitate its pestilential approaches. On the 23rd of June the services of seventy men had been lost to the British Commander. "We buried twenty, three nights ago, at one funeral," wrote an officer of the Fusiliers, "and the shrieks of the dying were something awful. Two poor ladies who were living over the hospital died, I believe from fright." Then other very grievous wants afflicted our people. Whilst in this miserable condition, it was discovered that nearly everything that could diminish the miseries of the sick who were to be left behind, or enable the convalescent to move forward, was wanting to the British Commander. The reign of terror had done its sure work. Camp-followers of all kinds were "almost unprocurable." Whilst our invalids lay gasping in the stifling atmosphere of the improvised hospital, there were few or none to pull the punkah-ropes or to water the tatties. There were few dhoolies, and, as workmen were not to be obtained, none could be made; and if they had been made, there would have been no bearers to carry

storing inside the Fort sufficient to make us independent for some time, had the insurgents kept hold of the city. In consequence of your being cut off from most of your people and resources outside, you were, in my opinion, at the time I arrived, disorganised, in so far as unable to equip a force or detachment to move. The exertions of yourself and officers, from my arrival until my departure from Allahabad, could not have been surpassed, and it surprised me you were so soon able to regain possession of the resources of the place, and enable me to move Renaud's detachment on the 30th." This was written on the 22nd of August. It may be added, that, two months before, Neill had written in his journal that great efforts were made to get in supplies, and he had added, "Captain Davidson seems to be a most energetic man."—*MS. Corr.*

1857. June 18—30.

them.* For everywhere the terror-stricken Natives stood aloof from the chastising Englishmen. It was as though we had dried up the wells and destroyed the crops, from which we were to obtain our sustenance. Without the aid of the Natives we could do nothing; and yet we were doing our best to drive them far beyond the glimmer of our tents.

Renaud's advance.

And so the last day of June found Neill still at Allahabad. Not a single European soldier had been sent to succour Cawnpore. But on the afternoon of that day a detachment was to start under Major Renaud of the Madras Fusiliers. It consisted of four hundred European soldiers, three hundred Sikhs, one hundred troopers of Irregular Cavalry, and two guns. Renaud, a fine soldier, with his heart in his work, had received written instructions from Neill as to his course of action; and he had become the not unwilling recipient of orders to inflict a terrible retribution upon all suspected of guilty complicity in the foul designs of the enemy. But indiscriminate slaughter was no part of the commission. "Attack and destroy," wrote Neill, "all places en route close to the road occupied by the enemy, but touch no others; encourage the inhabitants to return, and instil confidence into all of the restoration of British authority." Certain guilty villages were marked out for destruction, and all the men inhabiting them were to be slaughtered. All Sepoys of mutinous regiments not giving a good account of themselves were to be hanged. The town of Futtehpore, which had re-

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* Colonel Neill reported that "followers of all kinds are almost unprocurable; there are but few punkahs and no tatties; the men have, therefore, not the proper advantages of barrack accommodation for this hot season." It was discovered, too, that "there were but sixteen dhoolies available (although a considerable number of these was a primary requisite for the projected expedition), and all materials for making others were wanting, as well as workmen."

1857. June 30.

volted, was to be attacked, and the Pathan quarters destroyed, with all their inhabitants. "All heads of insurgents, particularly at Futtehpore, to be hanged. If the Deputy-Collector is taken, hang him, and have his head cut off and stuck up on one of the principal (Mahomedan) buildings of the town."* And whilst Renaud's column, with these terrible instructions, was to advance along the straight road to Cawnpore, Captain Spurgin, with another detachment, was to take a steamer up the Ganges to the same point, to co-operate with Renaud on his march, to anchor as near as possible to Wheeler's entrenchments, and to place the vessel at Sir Hugh's disposal for the rescue of the women and children, the sick and the wounded, of his distressed garrison.

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* The significance of these instructions will be made more apparent in a future chapter, wherein the story of Futtehpore will be told.

⁂ It should have been observed, at page 259, with reference to the statement that "those terrible Acts passed by the Legislative Council in May and July were in full operation," that, in addition to the Act of May 30 (already recited), another was passed on June 6, extending the powers given in the former: "By Act No. XIV. of 1857, passed on the 6th of June, provision was made for the punishment of persons convicted of exciting mutiny or sedition in the army, the offender was rendered liable to the punishment of death and the forfeiture of all his property; and persons guilty of harbouring such offenders were made liable to heavy punishment. Power was also given to general courts-martial to try all persons, whether amenable to the Articles of War or not, charged with any offence punishable by this or the preceding Act; and the Supreme and Local executive governments were authorised to issue commissions in any district, for the trial by single commissioners, without the assistance of law officers or assessors, and with absolute and final power of judgment and execution, of any crime against the State, or any 'heinous offence' whatever; the term 'heinous offence' being declared to include every crime attended with great personal violence, or committed with the intention of forwarding the designs of those who are waging war against the State."—*Despatch of Government of India to Court of Directors, December* 11, 1857.

CHAPTER II.

ARRIVAL OF HAVELOCK AT ALLAHABAD—MEETING WITH NEILL—ADVANCE OF RENAUD—HAVELOCK'S BRIGADE—CAWNPORE—THE CITY—THE CANTONMENT—SIR HUGH WHEELER—DANGERS OF HIS POSITION—THE ENTRENCHMENTS—REVOLT OF THE NATIVE REGIMENTS—DOONDOO PUNT, "NANA SAHIB"—THE SIEGE—THE CAPITULATION—MASSACRE AT THE GHAUT—ESCAPE OF A SOLITARY BOAT—ITS ADVENTURES ON THE RIVER—HEROIC DEEDS OF THOMSON AND DELAFOSSE.

1857. June. On that 30th of June—a day rendered memorable in the history of the revolt by a great event to be hereafter narrated—a new actor appeared on the scene at Allahabad. On that morning a soldier of high rank and high reputation arrived from Calcutta. His arrival would have been welcomed by all men, for good soldiers were sorely needed, but there was one adverse circumstance, which detracted from the general delight. The officer who had come up by dawk, with a special commission from Government to take command of the troops advancing to the relief of Cawnpore and Lucknow, thereby, in virtue of seniority, superseded Colonel Neill, in whom all men had a stedfast faith. Three days before the arrival of the officer who was to supersede him, he had written to the Governor-General, saying, "We are getting on well here, laying in grain and collecting carriage for Brigadier Havelock's Brigade." There might seem to be some taint of bitterness in these words. But Neill did not slacken in his exertions because the brigade, which he had hoped himself to command, was to be commanded by another. He had learnt some days before that it would not devolve upon him to rescue Sir Hugh Wheeler and his comrades, if already destruction had not descended upon them; but he had pushed forward his preparations for the advance with the utmost possible despatch, as though there had been no one coming, after he had borne so long the burden and heat of the day, to gather up the fruits of his toil, and to snatch from him the glory which he coveted. But recognising the chances of the service, to which every soldier must submit, he neither complained nor repined, but waited for his own time, feeling sure that it would come. 1857. June.

Havelock. He was no common man who had now arrived to command the brigade. Colonel Henry Havelock was a veteran officer of the Queen's Army; but during his forty years of service he had done as much good Indian work, in camp and cantonment, as if he had been attached to one of the regiments of the Company in the old days, when officers did not live on furlough. He had fought in Burmah and in Afghanistan, and was familiar with nearly every great military station lying between those two extreme points. He had tested the temper of Mahratta armies in Central India, and of the old Sikh battalions in the zenith of their warlike pride. He was every inch a soldier. Military glory was the passion of his life. But he was a man of the middle classes, without powerful interest or wealthy connexions, having only his own merit to recommend him; and he had

1857. June. risen slowly from subaltern to captain, from captain to field-officer, and now, at the age of sixty-two, he had never held an independent command; he had never been permitted to realise that great dream of his youth, that great ambition of his manhood—to head an army in the battle-field. For nearly half a century he had been sedulously studying his profession, reading every military memoir that he could obtain, English or Continental, and turning his matured knowledge to account by contributing from the wealth of his own personal experiences to the military history of his country. In a thorough, artistic knowledge of the principles of European warfare, no soldier in the country surpassed him. There was no disinclination anywhere to acknowledge this; but some thought that he was a theorist and a pedant, and doubted whether all his book-learning would profit him much amidst the stern realities of active service.

This mistrust was, perhaps, in some measure engendered by the fact that Henry Havelock was what in the light language of the camp was called a "saint." A man of strong religious convictions, he had married a daughter of the great Baptist Apostle, Dr. Marshman of Serampore. This alliance, which was one of unmixed happiness to him, was followed by his public acceptance of the tenets and formularies of the great and enlightened sect of Protestant Christianity in which his wife had been nurtured and reared. There was laughter and ridicule from the profane, but, perhaps, little surprise anywhere; for Havelock had ever been a God-fearing, self-denying man; somewhat rigid and austere; and having only Christian people to deal with, he had not hesitated to teach them to be good men as well as good soldiers. Even in his first campaign, thirty years before the period to which this History relates, the company which he commanded was known as "Havelock's saints"—men who were never drunk and always ready for service. But the Christian zeal of Henry Havelock never overlaid his martial instincts. He was thoroughly persuaded in his own mind that war was righteous and carnage beautiful. And ever as years went on, and his hair grew white, and his features sharpened, and his small spare figure lost the elasticity, though never the erectness of his prime, he cherished the same strong desire to command an army in the field. He has often been likened to one of the Puritan warriors of the Great Rebellion, and it has been said that "a more simple-minded, upright, God-fearing soldier was not among Cromwell's Ironsides."*

He was Adjutant-General of Queen's troops in India, when, in the cold weather of 1856-57, he was selected by Sir James Outram to command a division of the Army then embarking for Persia; and, with the permission of the Commander-in-Chief, he proceeded to Bombay to join the force with the rank of Brigadier-General. Small opportunity of gaining distinction was permitted to him, for the war speedily collapsed, and the sword was returned to the scabbard. On the 5th of April, when Havelock was mustering his division for church service, Outram announced to him that a treaty of peace had been signed. Of all the bountiful illustrations of God's providence working in our behalf, which that eventful year witnessed, this was perhaps the most signal. It was a merciful deliverance beyond the power of words fully to express. Havelock did not then know its full significance; but in a little while he acknow-

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* *Westminster Review*, quoted by Mr. Montgomery Martin.

1857. June.

ledged with thanksgiving the abundant goodness of God in thus setting free so many European regiments. Quitting Mohamrah on the 15th of May, he was at Bombay on the 29th. It had been his first thought to rejoin the Head-Quarters of the Army by a landward march, but, after consulting Lord Elphinstone and his Military Secretary, it appeared to him that the journey was not practicable; so he took ship for Galle, hoping there to catch a steamer for Calcutta. Off Cultura, in Ceylon, the vessel went aground at night, and was in infinite danger of going to pieces before assistance could come from shore. Mercifully delivered from the waves, he made his way to Galle, found a steamer there, which had been despatched for European troops, and embarked for Madras. There he found that Sir Patrick Grant, the Commander-in-Chief of that Presidency, had been summoned to Calcutta, and was waiting for the *Fire Queen* to convey him to the Hooghly.

Sir Patrick Grant.

It was of no small importance that Lord Canning should receive the advice and assistance of an experienced officer of the Bengal Army, acquainted with the character and the temper of the Native soldiery and versed in all military details. Sir Patrick Grant had been Adjutant-General of the Army of the chief Presidency; he had seen hard service in the field; and he was held in esteem both as a good soldier and as a ripe military administrator. When, therefore, tidings of General Anson's death reached Lord Canning,* he placed himself at once in communication with Grant. Having previously telegraphed to Madras, on the 6th of June the Governor-General wrote to him, saying, "My first impulse was to send for you to fill the place of acting Commander-in-Chief, and every day's deliberate consideration has confirmed it. I am satisfied that there is no man who can so well serve the State at this crisis as yourself, and I earnestly beg you to come to Calcutta as soon as you can. Should this not reach you in time to allow of your coming by the next packet, perhaps a sailing vessel could be taken up, by which time would be saved. But you will judge of this. I would have sent a steamer for you two days ago, but I have none here but the *Assaye*, and she must go to Rangoon for the Twenty-ninth as soon as she is coaled. The storm has not begun to clear yet, nor will it till Delhi falls." So Grant and Havelock, embarking together, steamed up the Bay to Calcutta, and arrived there on the 17th of June. It was a source of great personal happiness to the latter that he was accompanied by his son, then a subaltern of the Tenth Foot, in whom already were discernible all the instincts and capacities which combine to make a good soldier. 1857. June.

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* This was on the 3rd of June. The first intelligence came from Sir John Lawrence at Rawul Pindee. Writing to England on the following day, Lord Canning said: "It comes upon me as a sad and dispiriting blow in the midst of present troubles. But this is not a time to be depressed by any calamity, when every effort must be made to keep up the hearts of those around us. I assure you that they need it, though I am glad

For a man eager for military service on an extended field of action, no time could be more propitious. Welcome, indeed, to Lord Canning was the advent of so tried and capable a soldier as Havelock; and Patrick Grant, who well knew his worth, was forward to recommend him for immediate employment. News had come that Benares had been saved; but the fate of Allahabad was still doubtful, and

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to say that the panic which had seized the Calcutta world when the last mail left is, in a measure, suppressed. . . . . I have telegraphed to Sir Patrick Grant to come to Calcutta immediately to assume the office of acting Commander-in-Chief."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June. Cawnpore and Lucknow were girt around by deadly peril. It was the work of Government at this time, not only to push forward every available European soldier, but to take steps to turn those reinforcements to the best account by wise and skilful organisation. Havelock had already mapped out a plan of operations, the formation of a movable column, acting upwards from the Lower Provinces, being a part of it; and this column he was commissioned to command, with the rank of Brigadier-General. He was directed, "after quelling all disturbances at Allahabad, not to lose a moment in supporting Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow and Sir Hugh Wheeler at Cawnpore," and to "take prompt measures for dispersing and utterly destroying all mutineers and insurgents." The sovereign importance of swift action was earnestly impressed upon him, and it was added that the Commander-in-Chief, having "entire confidence in his well-known and often-proved high ability, vigour, and judgment," refrained from giving more definite instructions, and left him to shape his movements according to the circumstances that might develop themselves.*

The ambitious hopes of a life were now on the point of absolute fulfilment. He had an independent command; no one to control his movements in the field; no one to hamper his individual judgment. But with all his self-reliance, he rested, in his human weakness, more on the mighty arm of the God of Battles. "May God," he said, "give me wisdom to fulfil the expectations of Government, and to restore tranquillity in the disturbed districts." There were some circumstances against him. It was the worst season of the year for military operations. The alternations of scorching heat and drenching rain, which are the atmospherical necessities of an Indian July, were trying in the extreme to the European soldier. His force was to consist of four regiments of Infantry, with Cavalry and Artillery. Two of these regiments, the Sixty-fourth and the Eighty-seventh Highlanders, had belonged to his old Persian division; and this was a source of satisfaction to him. But he was sorely distressed when he thought of the want of horse, the want of guns, and the want of gunners, and the certain scarcity of carriage which would perplex him at Allahabad, where his force was to be formed, owing to the heavy loss of Commissariat cattle which had been sustained by us during the disorders of that place. Still, full of heart and hope, he took his leave of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, and turned his back on Calcutta, proceeding upwards by dawk, on the 25th of June. 1857. June.

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* Marshman's Life of Havelock.

Havelock and Neill.

And now, on the morning of the last day of the month, he was breakfasting with Neill at Allahabad. Much had these two fine soldiers to say to each other. Neill had to report what had been recently done at Allahabad. His instructions to Renaud and Spurgin were brought under review, and were cordially approved by Havelock. Nothing could have been better than the arrangements which had been made for the despatch of this vanguard of the relieving army, or more carefully considered than all the instructions which had been issued.* It was agreed

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* These instructions, the substance of which is given in the preceding chapters (and which were published verbatim in the Memoir of General Neill, in the "Lives of Indian Officers"), were highly commended by Sir Patrick Grant, who wrote: "Your instructions to Renaud and Spurgin are admirable, and provide for every possible present

1857. June.

that Renaud should advance that evening, but that the steamer which was to carry Spurgin and his detachment should not steam out at once, as its progress would be more rapid than that of the marching column, whose advance it was intended to cover.

Advance of Renaud's Column.

So Renaud, leading the van of the relieving force, that after long delay was sent on to save our imperilled people at Cawnpore, pressed on, proud of his commission, and eager to do the bidding of his chief. It was a grand movement in advance—but, like many of our grand movements, the heart-breaking words "Too Late" were written in characters of darkest night across it. On they marched for three days, leaving everywhere behind them as they went traces of the retributory power of the English in desolated villages and corpses dangling from the branches of trees.* But on the 2nd or 3rd of July,† a Native spy, sent by Sir Henry Lawrence from Lucknow,

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circumstances as well as all eventualities, and by them, and them only, Renaud should have been guided. I hope you were in time to prevent the withdrawing Spurgin's detachment from the steamer, and that the vessel has proceeded up the river according to your original intention. Sending her was an excellent measure, and I anticipate most favourable results from it, and she will be of incalculable value in collecting boats and assisting in making the passage of the river after the work to be done at Cawnpore is finished."—*MS. Correspondence.*

* I should be untrue to history if I did not record my belief that these retributory measures were distinguished by undue severity. William Russell, among whose many high qualities as a public writer truthfulness is conspicuous, records the following in his "Diary in India:" "In the course of a conversation to-day, an officer, who was attached to Renaud's column when it moved out in advance of Havelock's force, told me that the executions of Natives were indiscriminate to the last degree. . . In two days forty-two men were hanged on the roadside, and a batch of twelve men were executed because their faces were 'turned the wrong way' when they were met on the march. All the villages in his front were burnt when he halted. These 'severities' could not have been justified by the Cawnpore massacre, because they took place before that diabolical act. The officer in question remonstrated with Renaud, on the ground that, if he persisted in this course, he would empty the villages, and render it impossible to supply the army with provisions." This is confirmed by the account of the signs of retribution apparent to those who followed in the wake of Renaud's march.

† On the 3rd, Lieut. Chalmers rode into Allahabad with the news.

came into Renaud's camp, and announced that nothing could now be done for the relief of Cawnpore. 1857. July 4. Wheeler had capitulated, and all his people had been mercilessly destroyed.

This miserable intelligence was received with different emotions by Neill and Havelock. The former was long unwilling to believe that Cawnpore had fallen. He looked upon the story as an invention of the enemy intended to arrest the forward movement of the Force which the English were equipping for its relief. His wish was father to the thought; for, although he could not reproach himself for the delay that had occurred in the despatch of reinforcements to Wheeler's help—delays, which had the full sanction of the highest military authority in the country*—he could not, without reluctance, accept the fact that those delays had shattered all his hopes of succouring our distressed people, and had turned the relieving force into an army of retribution. But Havelock had full faith in the disastrous story. Two spies came into Allahabad. They spoke of what they had seen. Examined separately, they recited the same details; there were no contradictions or discrepancies in their evidence. They amply confirmed the reports which had reached Renaud's Camp, and had been sent in by him to Allahabad. Taking these

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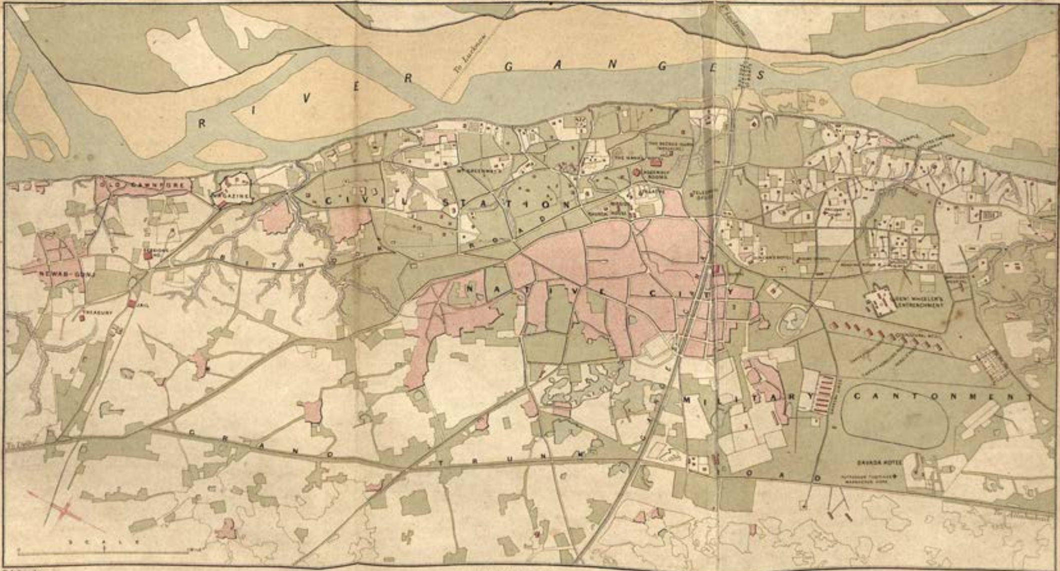
* Sir Patrick Grant had written to him more than once to urge him to be cautious, and not to strip Allahabad of troops or to send an insufficient force to Cawnpore. "You talk of an early advance towards Cawnpore, and I shall be right glad that you made a move in that direction; but I pray you to bear in mind that Allahabad is a point of the very greatest importance, the perfect security of which ought not to be neglected on any account." And again, on the following day: "Far be it from me to hamper you in any way—your energy, decision, and activity are admirable; but I must warn you to be cautious not to commit too small a force of Europeans towards Cawnpore. If Delhi has fallen, as we believe it has, the fugitives from it will all make for Cawnpore and Lucknow, and there will certainly be an immense gathering of scum of all sorts at those points."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June. different views of the actual position of affairs in advance, the two soldiers differed with respect to the course to be pursued. Havelock despatched orders to Renaud to stand fast. But Neill was eager for him to push forward, and telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief remonstrances against delay. Havelock argued that if Cawnpore had fallen, the troops that had besieged it would be released for action elsewhere, and would assuredly move down in immense numbers to intercept the advance of the column from Allahabad, and utterly to overwhelm it. But Neill, still thinking the report a *ruse* of the enemy, eagerly contended that all would be lost if we faltered at such a moment. Both were right in their several deductions. Time proved that Havelock was right as to the facts. Cawnpore had fallen, and the garrison had been destroyed almost to a man. How it happened—how for more than three weeks the little band of heroic Englishmen had stood their ground against the teeming multitude of the enemy, and how at last treachery had accomplished what could not be done by honest fighting, is now to be told. It is the saddest chapter in the whole history of the war—but, perhaps, the brightest. However feeble the recital, no Englishman can ever read it without the profoundest emotions both of pity and of pride.

The City of Cawnpore. The city or town of Cawnpore had nothing in or about it to make it famous in story. It had no venerable traditions, no ancient historical remains, no architectural attractions, to enable it to rank with Benares or Agra. Commercially it shone only as the city of the workers-in-leather. It was a great emporium for harness of all kinds, and for boots and

CAWNPORE 1857


RIVER GANGES
To Lucknow
To Lucknow
OLD CAWNPORE
MAGAZINE
CIVIL STATION
ROAD
NEWAB-GUNJ
JAIL
TREASURY
NATIVE CITY
THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS
TELEGRAPH OFFICE
GENL WHEELER'S ENTRENCHMENT
MILITARY CANTONMENT
GRAND TRUNK ROAD
SAVADA KOTEE
To Delhi
SCALE

Trel. Saunders

London: W. H. Allen & Co. Waterloo Place.

1857. May.

shoes alike of the Asiatic and the European types of civilisation. If not better, these articles were cheaper than elsewhere, and few English officers passed through the place without supplying themselves with leather-ware. But life and motion were never wanting to the place, especially on the river-side, where many stirring signs of mercantile activity were ever to be seen. The broad waters of the Ganges, near the Great Ghaut, floated vessels of all sizes and all shapes, from the stately venetianed pinnace to the rude open "dinghy," or wherry; and there clustering about the landing-steps, busy with or idly watching the debarkation of produce and goods of varied kinds, or waiting for the ferry-boats that crossed and recrossed the Ganges, were to be seen a motley assemblage of people of different nations and different callings and different costumes; whilst a continual Babel of many voices rose from the excited crowd. In the streets of the town itself there was little to evoke remark. But, perhaps, among its sixty thousand inhabitants there may have been, owing to its contiguity to the borders of Oude, rather a greater strength than common of the "dangerous classes."

The Cantonment.

The station of Cawnpore was a large, straggling place, six or seven miles in extent. The British lines stretched along the southern bank of the Ganges, which about midway between the two extremities of the cantonment was spanned by a bridge of boats, leading from a point opposite the city to the Lucknow road on the other bank. There was nothing peculiar to Cawnpore in the fact that the private dwelling-houses and public offices of the English were scattered about in the most promiscuous manner, as though they had fallen from the skies or been projected by an earthquake. At the north-western extremity,

1857. May. lying between the road to Bithoor and the road to Delhi, were the principal houses of the civilians, the Treasury, the Gaol, and the Mission premises. These buildings lay beyond the lines of the military cantonment, in the extreme north-western corner of which was the Magazine. In the centre, between the city and the river, were the Church, the Assembly rooms, the Theatre, the Telegraph office, and other public edifices; whilst scattered about here and there, without any apparent system, were the principal military buildings, European and Native; the Native lines lying for the most part in the rear towards the south-eastern point of the cantonment. It was the essential condition of an English cantonment that it should straggle, and there was not one more straggling than Cawnpore. But, on the whole, it was not a disagreeable, nor, indeed, an inconvenient place, although the distances to be travelled were great and the heat of the summer months was excessive. Even to the dust, which, except during the rainy season, was prodigious, the residents became accustomed after a little while; or, if they did not, they reconciled themselves to it by thinking that the station had many great social advantages, that it was well provided with means of amusement upon the most approved principles of *western* civilisation, and that "Europe goods" of all kinds were almost as plentiful as in Calcutta.

For during a long series of years Cawnpore had been one of the most important military stations in India. There were few officers either of the Queen's or the Company's Army who, during the period of their Eastern service, had not, at some time or other, done duty in that vast cantonment. But the extension of our Empire towards the Afghan frontier had greatly

1857. May.

diminished its importance as a military position; and although the subsequent annexation of Oude had done something to restore the faded pretensions of the Cawnpore division, the station itself only suffered further decline. It was still the Head Quarters of the Division, and the commanding General resided there with the Division Staff. But there were no longer European Regiments, or even an European Regiment, in its barracks. A great strength of Native soldiery garrisoned the place, with some sixty European Artillerymen, and afterwards sixty men of Her Majesty's Eighty-fourth Regiment and a few Madras Fusiliers, whom Tucker and Ponsonby had sent on from Benares.* The First, the Fifty-third, and the Fifty-sixth Sepoy Regiments of Infantry were there, and the Second Regiment of Sepoy Cavalry—in all, about three thousand men. And it was computed that the aggregate population of the Cantonment, with its vast assemblage of camp-followers, was nearly equal to that of the Town.

Sir Hugh Wheeler.

The Cawnpore Division was then commanded by General Sir Hugh Wheeler. He was an old and a distinguished officer of the Company's Army. He had seen much good service in Afghanistan and in the Punjab, and had won his spurs under Gough in the second Sikh War, in command of a division of his army. No man knew the Sepoys better, and no man was more respected by them. But he had known them a little too long. Looking back through more than half-a-century of good service, he could re-

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* *Ante*, p. 211. Mowbray Thomson says that "the European force consisted of the officers attached to the Sepoy regiments; sixty men of the Eighty-fourth Regiment; seventy-four men of the Thirty-second, who were invalided; sixty-five men of the Madras Fusiliers, and fifty-nine men of the Company's Artillery—about three hundred combatants in all." Mr. Sherer, in his official narrative, computes the invalids of the Thirty-second at thirty.

1857. May. member how they fought in the good old days of Lake and Ouchterlony. There was nothing, indeed, to be said against him except that he bore the burden of more than seventy years. He bore it lightly, succumbing little to the pressure. Still it was there; and it was a necessity that he should have lost beneath it some measure at least of the vigour and energy of his prime. He was of short stature and of light weight; and to the last he was a good and active horseman. Accompanied by his daughters, he often went out in pursuit of a jackal, with a few imported hounds, which he kept for the purpose;* and there was still enough of the fire of the sportsman in the ashes of the veteran to suffer him, in the crisp air of the early morning, to enjoy the excitement of the chase.

But General Wheeler, though far advanced in years, had lost none of the clearness of his mental vision. He had not become blind to the failings of the Sepoy; he had not encased himself in that hard incredulity which forbade many to believe it possible that the Native soldier could ever be "untrue to his salt." Ever since the first symptoms of disquietude at Barrackpore and Berhampore had been manifested, he had watched narrowly the Sepoy regiments under his immediate command, looking for indications of a like temper among them.† And when news came of the revolt of the Native Regiments at Meerut and at Delhi, he saw clearly that it would demand the exercise of all his influence to prevent a similar explosion at Cawnpore. Then he lamented that hard necessity had stripped the station of European troops, in order that Oude and other newly-acquired territories might be defended. Annexation was doing its work. We had extended our Empire without increasing our Army; and so it happened that many of the most important stations between the new and the old capital of India were, saving a few English gunners, utterly without European troops. It would be difficult to conceive any position more dispiriting than Wheeler's in that fatal month of May. Lucknow had got the regiment, which might otherwise have been stationed at Cawnpore; and not only was the latter negatively, but positively, weakened by the arrangement, for all the human *impedimenta*, the women, the children, and the invalids of the Thirty-second Queen's, had been left at that place. And there were many besides these. Cawnpore abounded in excellent house accommodation, as well as in public buildings of all kinds; and not merely the wives and children of our civil and military functionaries, high and low, but the families also of European or Eurasian merchants and traders were gathered there in large numbers, and the grievous responsibility of protecting all these helpless ones then fell upon the aged General. His half-a-century of service had brought him no such work as this. 1857. May.

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* See Mowbray Thomson's narrative. The blood which ran in the veins of Wheeler's children was not that of the pure European race.

† "He had proved himself on so many occasions so fertile in resources, so ready to overcome difficulties, so prompt, active, and energetic, that he was thought the man of all others most competent to deal with an insurrection of this character—most fitted to unravel the web of mystery in which its origin was then clouded, and to open the minds of the Sepoys to the insensate folly of their proceedings. And if this had been a mere military outbreak, as some have imagined; if the dispossessed princes and people of the land, farmers, villagers, ryots, had not made common cause with the Sepoys, there is every reason to believe that but a portion of the Force would have revolted."—*Red Pamphlet.*

There was much then going on in the Lines of which, doubtless, the General knew nothing; but now and then, as the month of May advanced, unpleasant revelations were made to him through his officers. It did not appear that the Sepoys were disaffected or State of the Soldiery.

1857. May. even discontented, but, as in other places of which I have spoken, a great fear was settling down upon our Native soldiery. The most extravagant stories were current among them. The Hindoo and Mahomedan troops on a given day were to be assembled upon an undermined parade-ground, and the whole of them blown into the air. This and other fables equally monstrous were freely circulated among the Sepoys and readily believed. Nothing could be more alarming to one well acquainted with the character of the Native soldier than the free acceptance of stories of this kind, which showed that the old bonds of confidence were utterly broken; and Sir Hugh Wheeler, therefore, plainly saw that the danger was one which it would be most difficult to arrest, for nothing is so intractable as a panic. For some days after the news from Meerut and Delhi had reached Cawnpore, he had hope that the public mind might be reassured; but this soon passed away. It was plain to him, as time wore on, that the excitement rather increased than diminished. And the peril which stared him in the face was not merely the peril of mutinous soldiery; he was threatened also by an insurgent population, which might have overwhelmed him. And it seemed to him in this emergency that the best means of defending the lives of the Christian communities and maintaining, though only on a narrow space, the authority of the Christian Government, until succours should arrive to enable him to act on the offensive, was by throwing up some defensive works, within which the English might gather themselves together, and with the aid of their guns keep the enemy at a distance. Beyond this there was nothing that he could do; and it was not easy to determine how even this little was to be done.

1857. May. The Question of Defence.

Of all the defensible points in the Cantonment, it was held, in the first instance, that the Magazine in the north-western corner of the military lines was that best adapted, in the exigency which had arisen, for a defensive position. It almost rested on the river, and it was surrounded by walls of substantial masonry. But instead of this, Sir Hugh Wheeler selected a spot about six miles lower down to the south-east, at some distance from the river, and not far from the Sepoys' huts. There were quarters of some kind for our people within two long hospital barracks (one wholly of masonry, the other with a thatched roof)—single-storied buildings with verandahs running round them, and with the usual out-houses attached. This spot he began to entrench, to fortify with artillery, and to provision with supplies of different kinds. Orders went forth to the Commissariat, and their efforts were supplemented by the managers of the regimental messes, who freely sent in their stores of beer and wine, hermetically-sealed dainties, and other creature-comforts that might serve to mitigate the evils of the brief detention which was believed to be the worst that could befal us. But the aggregate amount of food was lamentably ill-proportioned to the exigencies of the occasion. The Native contractors failed, as they often do fail at such times, and the stores which they sent in fell short of the figures in the paper-indents. All else was of the same kind—weak, scanty, and insufficient. As to the so-called fortifications, they were so paltry that an English subaltern could have ridden over them on a cast-horse from the Company's Stud. The earth-works were little more than four feet high, and were not even bullet-proof at the crest. The apertures for the artillery exposed both our guns and our

1857. May. gunners, whilst an enemy in adjacent buildings might find cover on all sides. Not, however, from ignorance or negligence did this insufficiency arise. The last weeks of the dry season were upon us, and the earth was so hard that it was difficult to dig it, and so friable when dug that the necessary cohesion was almost unattainable.

It has often been said that Wheeler ought to have chosen the Magazine as the centre of his lines of defence, and that all the subsequent evil arose from the absence of this obvious precaution. The considerations which suggested themselves to the military critics were not absent from his own mind. But there was one paramount thought which over-ruled them. The first step towards the occupation of the Magazine would have been the withdrawal of the Sepoy guard; and to have attempted this would certainly have given the signal for an immediate rising. With the small European force at his disposal it would have been manifestly unwise to provoke a collision. If the first blow were to be struck by our own people, it would, he believed, have immediate results of a far more disastrous character than those which were likely to arise from a spontaneous revolt against British authority, detached from those feelings of animosity and resentment which might have been engendered by a first offensive movement on our part. It must be admitted that the spot selected for our refuge was, indeed, but a miserable place for the protection of a large body of Christian people against the thousands and tens of thousands that might surge up to destroy them. But it was not believed, at that time, that Wheeler and his followers would be called upon to face more than the passing danger of a rising of the "budmashes" of

1857. May.

the city and the bazaars. All the information that reached him confirmed the belief that if the regiments should mutiny they would march off at once to Delhi. And he was in almost daily expectation of being recruited from below by reinforcements sent upwards from Calcutta. All that was needed, it then appeared to the General and to others, was a place of refuge, for a little space, during the confusion that would arise on the first outbreak of the military revolt, when, doubtless, there would be plunder and devastation. It was felt that the Sepoys had at that time no craving after European blood, and that their departure would enable Wheeler and his Europeans to march to Allahabad, taking all the Christian people with him.*

Help from Lucknow.

Whilst these precautions were being taken, the General sent an express to Lucknow, requesting Sir Henry Lawrence to lend him, for a while, a company or two of the Thirty-second Regiment, as he had reason to expect an immediate rising at Cawn-

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* However sound these reasons may have been, it is not to be questioned that the selection was a great misfortune. The Magazine position is thus described by General Neill, after visiting the place, on his first arrival at Cawnpore: "It is a walled defence, walled enclosure, proof against musketry, covering an area of three acres—ample room in it for all the garrison—close to the bank of the river; the houses close to it are all defensible, and they, with the Magazine, could have been held against any Native force, as having the large and [*obscure*] guns, with abundance of ammunition, neither the Nana nor the Natives would have come near them. They could have moved out and attacked them with the guns, and would have not only saved themselves but the city, to say nothing of a large arsenal and many thousand stand of arms, artillery tents, harness, &c. &c. General Wheeler ought to have gone there at once; no one could have prevented him; they might have saved everything they had almost, if they had. There is something awful in the number of catastrophes, which could have been avoided by a common degree of caution."—*MS. Correspondence.* It was not, however, want of caution, but perhaps over-caution, that caused Wheeler not to resort to the Magazine buildings. The distance between the Lines and the Magazine is to be taken into account; and some military authorities may differ from Neill's opinion, that no one could have prevented Wheeler from betaking himself, with his women, children, and invalids, to the Magazine.

1857. May.

pore.* Little could Lawrence spare a single man from the troublous capital of Oude; but those were days when Christian gentlemen rose to noble heights of generosity and self-sacrifice; and Henry Lawrence, who, at any time, would have divided his cloak with another, or snatched the helmet with the last drop of water from his own lips, was not one to hesitate when such a demand was made upon him. He sent all that he could send—eighty-four men of the Thirty-second, Queen's—packed closely in such wheeled carriages as could be mustered. He sent also two detachments of the Oude Horse to keep open the road between Cawnpore and Agra, and render such other assistance as Irregular Horse well commanded can render, if only they be true to their leaders. A party of Oude Artillery accompanied them with two field guns, under Lieutenant Ashe—a young officer of rare promise, which was soon to ripen into heroic performance.†

Fletcher Hayes.

With these detachments went Captain Fletcher Hayes, Military Secretary to Sir Henry Lawrence—a man of great capacity and great courage; in the prime of his life and the height of his daring. He had graduated in one of our great English universities, and was an erudite scholar and an accomplished gentleman. He was now sent to Cawnpore to ascertain the real state of affairs there for the information of his Chief. So he mounted his horse and started with the Cavalry, giving up his carriage, in which he had at first intended to travel, to a party of European soldiers:—"For," he wrote, "as they represented three hundred rounds of balled ammunition ready at any moment for anybody, I thought that they were of far more importance than any number of military secretaries." All through the day, from dawn to some hours after sunset, they toiled on, suffering severely from the intense heat and the parching thirst. But they reached Cawnpore without disaster; and in a little while Hayes had taken in the situation and had flung himself into the work that lay before him, as if he had been one of the garrison himself. 1857. May.

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* It should be observed that Lucknow was within the Cawnpore Division of the Army, and therefore, in the normal state of affairs, Wheeler might have made any disposition of the troops under his command that seemed fit to him. But when the crisis arose, Sir Henry Lawrence had telegraphed to the Governor-General for "plenary military authority in Oude," and Lord Canning had gladly given him the powers he had sought (vol. i. page 616), writing to Wheeler at the same time a kindly explanation of the circumstances, which had reconciled the General to the change.

† The number of Europeans sent by Sir Henry Lawrence to Cawnpore has been variously stated. His Military Secretary, in a letter to Mr. Edmonstone, sets it down at fifty men and two officers. The Cavalry detachments were sent on by Sir Hugh Wheeler, and the officers were murdered; but Ashe and the guns remained, or returned, to take good part in the defence.

And when English authority at Cawnpore appealed to Henry Lawrence for assistance, as though by some strange fatality it were doomed that aid should be sought, in the crisis which had arisen, from the two extremes of humanity, an appeal was made to our neighbour, the Rajah of Bithoor. The Nana Sahib.

Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, after the visit to Lucknow, recorded in my first volume,* had returned to his home at Bithoor. He had, doubtless, clearly discerned the feeling in the Oudh capital—nay, throughout the whole province. He knew well that there was a great excitement—it might be of danger, it might be of fear—alive among the Sepoys

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* *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 575—6.

1857. May. all over Upper India. He felt that he hated the English, and that his time had come. But all that was passing in the mind of the disappointed Mahratta was as a sealed book to the English. Of course the whole story of the disappointment was on record. Had it not gone from Calcutta to London—from London back to Calcutta; and from Calcutta again to Cawnpore? And did it not cover many sheets of foolscap? Military men might know little of the story which has been told in this book,* and to civilians a rejected memorial was so common a thing, that even to the best-informed of them there could have appeared to be no earthly reason why Doondoo Punt should not accept his position quietly, submissively, resignedly, after the fashion of his kind, and be ever after loyal to the Government that had rejected his claims. So when danger threatened them, it appeared to the authorities at Cawnpore that assistance might be obtained from the Nana Sahib. For although Lord Dalhousie and the Company had refused to increase his store, he had abundance of money and all that money could purchase, including horses and elephants and a large body of retainers—almost, indeed, a little army of his own. He had been in friendly intercourse with our officers up to this very time, and no one doubted that as he had the power, so also he had the will to be of substantial use to us in the hour of our trouble. It was one of those strange revenges, with which the stream of Time is laden. The "arbiter of others' fate" had suddenly become "a suppliant for his own;" and the representatives of the British Government were suing to one recently a suitor cast in our own high political courts. The madness of this was seen at Lucknow; but it was not seen at Cawnpore. So the alliance of the Nana Sahib was sought as an element of strength in our hour of trouble.*

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* *Ante*, vol. i. pp. 98, *et seq.*

1857. May.

It was in this wise: To secure the safety of the Government treasure was necessarily at such a time one of the main objects of both the military and the civil authorities. If it could be lodged within the entrenchments it would be out of the grasp of the soldiery, who, as our officers well knew, on the first open manifestation of revolt, would assuredly make for the Treasury and gorge themselves with the spoil. But when there was mention made of an intention to remove the coin, the Sepoys, by whom it was guarded, were outwardly all loyalty and devotion, and declared that it was safe in their hands. The reason of this was manifest; and Wheeler, anxious above all things not to precipitate a collision, shrunk from insisting upon a measure which would in all probability have been violently resisted. To counteract any danger from this source, it was considered a good stroke of policy to avail ourselves of the assistance of a party of the armed followers of the Nana Sahib, who had been in frequent intercourse with Mr. Hillersdon, the Collector, and who had smilingly assured that officer of his sympathy and friendship. The Treasury stood at a little distance from the Bithoor road, some miles away from the military lines; and very soon some two hundred of the retainers of the Nana, with a couple of guns, were posted at Newab-gunj, which commanded both the Treasury and the Magazine.†

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* Mr. Martin Gubbins states that the General was distinctly warned not to trust the Nana Sahib. "Sir H. Lawrence," he says, "concurred in my suspicions, and by his authority I addressed Sir Hugh Wheeler, cautioning him against the Nana, and stating Sir Henry's belief that he was not to be depended upon."—*Mutinies in Oudh*, page 32.

† Some time afterwards, Tantia Topee gave the following account of

1857.
The Place of Refuge.
May 22.

This was on the 22nd of May. On the preceding day the reinforcements from Lucknow had arrived; and about the same time, on the suggestion of the General, the women and children and non-combatants had betaken themselves to the place of refuge within the improvised entrenchments. There was then a scene of frightful confusion, which one, who had just arrived from Lucknow, thus graphically described. "The General," wrote Fletcher Hayes in a private letter to Secretary Edmonstone, "was delighted to hear of the arrival of the Europeans, and soon from all sides, I heard of reports of all sorts and kinds which people kept bringing to the General until nearly one A.M., on the 22nd, when we retired to rest. At six A.M. I went out to have a look at the various places, and since I have been in India never witnessed so frightful a scene of confusion, fright, and bad arrangement as the European barracks presented. Four guns were in position loaded, with European artillerymen in nightcaps and wide-awakes and side-arms on, hanging to the guns in groups—looking like melodramatic buccaneers. People of all kinds, of every colour, sect, and profession, were crowding into the barracks.

Mr. Hillersdon's negotiations with the Nana Sahib. I give it as the Native version of the transaction:—"In the month of May, 1857, the Collector of Cawnpore sent a note of the following purport to the Nana Sahib at Bithoor, viz. that he begged him (the Nana) to forward his wife and children to England. The Nana consented to do so, and four days afterwards the Collector wrote to him to bring his troops and guns with him from Bithoor to Cawnpore. I went with the Nana and about one hundred Sepoys and three hundred matchlock-men and two guns to the Collector's house at Cawnpore. The Collector was then in the entrenchments, and not in his house. He sent us word to remain, and we stopped at his house during the night. The Collector came in the morning and told the Nana to occupy his own house, which was in Cawnpore. We accordingly did so. We remained there four days, and the gentleman said it was fortunate we had come to his aid, as the Sepoys had become disobedient; and that he would apply to the General in our behalf. He did so, and the General wrote to Agra, whence a reply came that arrangements would be made for the pay of our men."—*MS. Records.*

Whilst I was there, buggies, palki-gharrees, vehicles of all sorts, drove up and discharged cargoes of writers, tradesmen, and a miscellaneous mob of every complexion, from white to tawny—all in terror of the imaginary foe; ladies sitting down at the rough mess-tables in the barracks, women suckling infants, ayahs and children in all directions, and—officers too! In short, as I have written to Sir Henry, I saw quite enough to convince me that if any insurrection took or takes place, we shall have no one to thank but ourselves, because we have now shown to the Natives how very easily we can become frightened, and when frightened utterly helpless. During that day (the 22nd) the shops in all the bazaars were shut, four or five times, and all day the General was worried to death by people running up to report improbable stories, which in ten minutes more were contradicted by others still more monstrous. All yesterday (23rd) the same thing went on; and I wish that you could see the European barracks and the chapel close to it—and their occupants. I believe that if anything will keep the Sepoys quiet, it will be, next to Providence, the great respect which they all have for General Wheeler, and for him alone. He has all his doors and windows open all night, and has never thought of moving or of allowing his family to move. Brigadier Jack, Parker, the cantonment magistrate, and Wiggins, the Judge Advocate-General, are, I believe, the only people who sleep in their houses."*

1857. May 22—23.

Temper of the Second Cavalry.

The chief source of immediate danger at this time was the temper of the Second Cavalry. The place in the Army List assigned to this regiment had, for some time, been a blank. It was the number of the regi-

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* MS. Correspondence.

1857. May.

ment which had disgraced itself at Purwandurrah, and had been ignominiously disbanded; and it was not until 1850, that the number had been restored to the List of the Bengal Army.* That the troopers were ripe for revolt was certain, for already they were quietly making arrangements to send away their families and their property, and soon they had nothing in their huts but their drinking-vessels. They stood, as it were, with their loins girt about for action, and Wheeler had more than once credible information that they were about immediately to strike. It was believed that, differing from the infantry regiments at Cawnpore, these cavalry Sepoys included in their programme the murder of their officers. There were many Mahomedans in the corps, and Mahomedan feeling was then strong in the place. There had been great gatherings at the mosques, in which the Mussulman Sepoys had taken a forward part, for the full discussion of the crisis. And it was thought, as had before been thought, in other places, that the festival of the EED, on the 24th of May, would prove the appointed day for a great Mahomedan demonstration. But it passed over as quietly as any other day. There was the usual interchange of courtesies and compliments, as in quiet times, between the two races; and on one side, at least, there was much self-congratulation that the anniversary was well over.

Progress of mistrust.

But all this time, as the arrangements were proceeding apace for the security of our place of refuge, the general feeling of mistrust was fixing itself in the hearts of the soldiery. The principle of "trusting all in all or not at all" was in those days the only one to be worked out in action with any prospect of success. There was strength in striking the first blow with a heavy mailed hand. There was strength also in perfect quietude and composure. But in any middle course there was weakness; and whether in doing or in suffering, "to be weak is to be miserable." When, therefore, Wheeler began to throw up defences which could not defend him, and to betray his mistrust of the Sepoys, without having it in his power effectually to arrest the danger, of which such action indicated the dread, there was nothing but misery before him. Indeed, when our people were seen wildly leaving their homes and seeking safety either within our so-called entrenchments or in some strongly-built edifices in the neighbourhood, and the Sepoys beheld the English artillerymen placing guns in position, the end was certain, and the beginning of the end had come. Some regarded the movement as an indication of fear; some looked upon it as a menace. All regarded it as a proof of mistrust. Confidence was at an end; there was a deadly breach between the officer and the soldier. 1857. May.

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* Another regiment (the Eleventh Light Cavalry) had been raised in the place of the Second; and the officers of the latter had been transferred to it bodily. Only one trooper of the Second had been re-enlisted — the Havildar-Major, Bhowany Singh, of whom more hereafter. The Eleventh was renumbered the Second, for its gallantry at Mooltan.

But during that last week of May, whatever plots and perils might have been fermenting beneath the surface, outwardly everything was calm and reassuring. And the brave old General began to think that the worst was over, and that he would soon be able to assist Lawrence at Lucknow. On the 1st of June, he wrote to Lord Canning, saying, "I have this day sent eighty transport-train bullocks in relays at four stages for the purpose of bringing up Europeans from Allahabad; and in a few—a very few days, I shall consider Cawnpore safe—nay, that I may aid Lucknow, if need be." And he added, "I May 24—31. June 1.

1857. June. have left my house and am residing day and night in my tent, pitched within our entrenched position, and I purpose continuing to do so until tranquillity is restored. The heat is dreadful. I think that the fever has abated; but the excitement and distrust are such that every act, however simple or honestly intended, is open to misapprehension and misrepresentation. My difficulties have been as much from the necessity of making others act with circumspection and prudence as from any disaffection on the part of the troops. In their present state, a single injudicious step might set the whole in a blaze. It is my good fortune in the present crisis, that I am well known to the whole Native Army as one who, although strict, has ever been just and considerate to them to the best of his ability, and that in a service of fifty-two years I have ever respected their rights and their prejudices. Pardon, my Lord, this apparent egotism. I state the fact solely as accounting for my success in preserving tranquillity at a place like Cawnpore. Indeed, the men themselves have said that my name amongst them had alone been the cause of their not following the example so excitingly set them."*

Help to Lucknow. And, indeed, this pleasurable anticipation of reciprocating Henry Lawrence's chivalrous generosity was not so much empty talk. Part of the detachment of the Eighty-Fourth, which had been sent from Benares,† was now passed on to Lucknow. And

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* MS. Correspondence.

† See *ante*, page 289. They appear to have reached Cawnpore on the night of the 26th, or morning of the 27th of May. They were sent to Lucknow on the 3rd of June.—See Wheeler's telegram to Government. "Sir H. Lawrence having expressed some uneasiness, I have just sent him by post-carriages, out of my small force, two officers and fifty men of Her Majesty's Eighty-fourth Foot. Conveyance for more not available. This leaves me weak, but I trust to holding my own until more Europeans arrive."

1857. June.

as they crossed the Bridge of Boats and set their faces towards the Oudh capital, there was inward laughter and self-congratulation under many a dusky skin at e thought of what the English were doing. It was ard to say, in that conjuncture, at what particular point European manhood was most needed, but it is certain that in that entrenched position at Cawnpore it was weary work for those who kept watch and ward, day and night, with loaded guns, behind the low mud walls we had raised for our defence.* And bitter was the grief, a few days later, that a single white soldier had been suffered to leave Cawnpore.

Working of the plot.

For when the month of June came in, the revolt of the Native Brigade was merely a question of time—a question of precedence. It was to be; but it was not quite settled how it was to be—how it was to begin. There was not that perfect accord between the regiments out of which simultaneous action could arise. Some were eager to strike at once; some counselled delay.† The Cavalry troopers, always the most excitable and impetuous, were ready for the affray before their more slowly-moving comrades of

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* "Last night I went the rounds of our positions with the General. The battery is divided in half, and placed east and west, commanding the principal approaches; we came upon one half battery without any challenge or the least exhibition of any alarm on the part of the gunners. I walked up and put my hand on one of the guns, and could have spiked all three with the greatest ease. . . . Some little time afterwards the officer in charge was found asleep, and was immediately put under arrest. . . Dempster, the Adjutant of the Artillery, was so worn out with watching at night and performing other duties, that, seeing he was so done up and could not look after both batteries, I said I would take one, and accordingly remained in charge till daybreak."—*Fletcher Hayes to Henry Lawrence. May* 26. *MS.*

† "The chief obstacle to a rise and insurrection of the Sepoys is, that they are undecided as to who should commence it. They have been wrangling among themselves for some days. An attempt was made by a Native officer to make the Cavalry seize their arms and turn out. He made a trumpeter take his trumpet and commence with the signal, but the trumpet was seized and snatched away by another Native officer. Last night there was an alarm, and the gunners stood to their guns, but everything passed over quietly."—*The Same to the Same. May* 26.

1857. June. the Infantry. But everywhere in the Lines and in the Bazaars the plot was working. And the plotters were not only in the Lines and the Bazaars. Out at Newab-gunj, where the retainers of the Bithoor Rajah were posted, and where the Rajah himself had fixed his quarters for a little while to do the bidding of his friends the Feringhees, were the germs of a cruel conspiracy. To Doondoo Punt and to the ministers, Hindoo and Mahomedan, who surrounded him, there could be no more grateful tidings than those which came from the Sepoy's quarters; and as they looked at the Treasury, the Magazine, and the Gaol, which lay so temptingly at hand, it seemed to them that the work was easy. Some of these retainers were in communication with the men of the Second Cavalry; and it is stated that arrangements were soon made for an interview between one of the Cavalry soubahdars, an active agent of sedition, and the Nana Sahib of Bithoor. It is not easy to extract from the mass of Native evidence—often second-hand reports derived from interested or prejudiced sources—the true history of all the secret meetings which have been described, and to feel in such a case the confidence which should never be absent from historical assertion.* But it is stated that during the first days of June there were frequent interviews between the

Teeka Singh.

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* The depositions taken down by Colonel Williams, Commissioner of Police, North-West Provinces, are very full, and they are of a highly interesting, and, in some respects, valuable character; but Colonel Williams himself admits that much must be received with caution, as being only hearsay evidence. Take, for example, the following from the evidence of Sheo Churren Das: "Three or four days before the troops broke out, Teeka Singh, Soubahdar of the Second Cavalry, began to have interviews with the Nana, and said to him on one occasion, 'You have come to take charge of the Magazine and Treasury of the English. We all, Hindoos and Mahomedans, have united for our religions, and the whole Bengal Army have become one in purpose. What do you say to it?' The Nana replied, 'I also am at the disposal of the Army.' *I heard this from the Sowars themselves.*"

1857. June.

chiefs of the rebellious Sepoys and the inmates of the Bithoor Palace; and that it was known to the soldiery before they broke into rebellion that the Nana was with them, and that all his resources would be thrown into the scale on the side of the nascent rebellion.

June 4. Outbreak of the Sepoys.

On the night of the 4th of June, the Second Cavalry and the First Infantry Regiment were ready for immediate action. The troopers had got to horse and the foot-men were equipping themselves. As ever, the former were the first to strike.* It was after the wonted fashion. There was a firing of pistols, with perhaps no definite object; then a conflagration which lit up the sky and told our people in the entrenchments that the game of destruction had commenced; and then a mad nocturnal ride to Newab-gunj, scenting the treasure and the stores in the Magazine. The First Regiment soon followed them. In vain their colonel, calling them his "baba-logue," his children, had implored them, in affectionate, parental tones, not to stain themselves by such wickedness. It was too late. The Sepoys did not wish to harm their officers, but they were bent on rebellion. They hurried after the Cavalry, setting their faces towards the north-west, where lay the Treasury, the Gaol, and the Magazine, with Delhi in the distance. Thither as they went they burnt, and

Colonel Ewart.

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* A casual circumstance, of no great importance in itself, seems just at this time to have accelerated the crisis. It is thus summarised by Colonel Williams, in his synopsis of the evidence collected by him: "Again the unfortunate incident of a cashiered officer named Cox firing on a patrol of the Second Cavalry on the night of the 2nd of June, and his acquittal after trial on the following day, on the plea of being unconscious at the time from intoxication, caused much dissatisfaction, the mutinously-inclined Cavalry declaring openly that perhaps their fire-arms might be discharged by accident some day. The violent and insubordinate conduct of the troops, particularly of the Cavalry, though they still ostensibly took duty, caused many to take refuge in the entrenchments."

1857. June 4.

plundered, and spread devastation along their line of march, but left the Christian people behind them as though not lusting for their blood.

Arrived in the neighbourhood of Newab-gunj, the Sepoys of the two regiments fraternised with the retainers of the Nana. The Treasury was sacked, the gates of the Gaol were thrown open and the prisoners released. The public offices were fired and the records burnt. The Magazine, with all its supplies of ammunition, and the priceless wealth of heavy artillery, fell into the hands of the mutineers.* The spoil was heaped upon elephants and on carts, which the troopers had brought from their Lines; and the one thought of the soldiery was a hurried march to the great imperial centre of the rebellion. But where were the two other regiments? The Sepoys at Newab-gunj had begun to doubt whether their comrades were coming to join them.[*] All through the hours of darkness and of dawn the Fifty-third and the Fifty-sixth gave no sign of comradeship. Their officers had spent the night with them in their Lines, and from two in the morning till after sunrise the regiments had been on parade, every officer with his own company. Then they were dismissed; the men took off their uniforms, and prepared for their morning meal. The English officers went to the entrenchments or to their own bungalows. Then the latent fire of mutiny began to spread from man to man, from company to company. Some emissaries from the Second Cavalry had come in to tempt them. Their share of the spoil might be lost by delay. It might have been that no presence, no influence of English officers could then have kept the regiments true to their allegiance. The experiment was not tried, but another was substituted for it. Wheeler's entrenched position commanded the parade-ground, and a long far-reaching gun was brought to bear upon the Sepoys' Lines. They broke at the third discharge of the British cannon, and made their way in wild confusion to Newab-gunj. They broke, but not all; some, still true to their old masters, followed them into the entrenchments, and were faithful to the end of their lives. 1857. June 5.

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* It is stated, and on very high authority, that Sir Hugh Wheeler and his Staff were ignorant of the contents of the Cawnpore Magazine. I find the following in a letter from General Neill, in which he gives the results of his inquiry into the "Story of Cawnpore." He had, at that time, been in communication with the only two surviving officers of the siege. "General Wheeler was then under the delusion that the Nana would assist him. All the mutineers went one march to Delhi. The Nana got them to return, and General Wheeler found himself surrounded, and guns firing upon him in every direction from our own Arsenal, of the existence of which guns General Wheeler and his staff were until then ignorant. It appears that a committee of officers, some time before, were sent down to examine the Arsenal, and to report what was in it. They came down in the usual easy-going style—only thought of tents and other trifles—happened not to be shown the gun-sheds, and did not enter the Magazine; in fact, forgot all about it, and reported that there was nothing in the 'Magazine,' as it was styled." The authority of such a man as General Neill must, in all cases, be respected, but it is hardly credible that the contents of the Magazine were unknown to the Artillery officers at Cawnpore, especially to the Ordnance Commissariat Department. Moreover, it is to be observed that the supposed ignorance is not consistent with the undoubted anxiety manifested by Wheeler and his chief officers to blow up the Magazine at the commencement of the outbreak. Arrangements had been made for this, but the feat could not be accomplished. Colonel Williams says: "The Assistant-Commissary, Mr. Riley, had been directed to blow up the Magazine, but was unfortunately prevented by the Sepoys on guard there."

The first march to Delhi.

It was still the game of the Cawnpore mutineers to make their way straight to Delhi, to join the regiments already assembled there, and to serve the cause of the King. And they gladly recognised the Nana Sahib as their leader. They had money and munitions of war and carriage for the march, and

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[*] It seems that the Cavalry had broken into the Treasury and begun the work of appropriation before the Infantry arrived.

1857. June 5. they expected great things from the restored sovereignty of the Mogul. But Doondoo Punt, stimulated by those about him, and chiefly, it is thought, by the wily Mahomedan, Azimoollah, looked askance at the proposed centralisation of rebellion, and urged upon the Sepoy leaders that something better might be done. They had made one march to the imperial city, but halted at Kullianpore, whither the Nana had accompanied them. Then they began to listen to the voice of the charmer, and to waver in their resolution. The Bithoor people might be right. It might be better to march back to Cawnpore.*

Designs of the Nana Sahib. Wise in his generation, the Nana Sahib saw clearly the danger of an eclipse. To march to Delhi would be to place himself in a subordinate position—perhaps to deprive him of all substantive authority under the baneful influence of Mahomedan jealousy. The troops might desert him. The Emperor might repudiate him. In the neighbourhood of Cawnpore he would be supreme master of the situation. He knew well the weakness of the English. He knew well that at Lucknow the danger which beset us was such that no assistance could be looked for from that quarter, and that from none of the large towns on the Ganges and the Jumna—as Benares, Allahabad, and Agra—had Wheeler any prospect of immediate relief. With four disciplined Native regiments and all his Bithoor retainers at his back—with guns and great stores of ammunition and treasure in abundance, what might he not do? If the range of his own imagination did not take in at once the grand idea of the restoration of the Peishwahship, there were those at his elbow to suggest the prospect of such a consummation. He had been told by Azimoollah that the power of the English in Europe was declining. He knew that we were weak in India—that vast breadths of country, over which Rebellion was running riot, lay stripped of European troops. Now, he felt, was the time to strike. The game was in his own hands. The ambition and the malice of the Mahratta might be gratified at one blow. 1857. June 5.

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* This is the received version of what took place between the Bithoor people and the Sepoys. It is not, however, given with any certainty of its correctness. Tantia Topee afterwards endeavoured to make it appear that the Nana had acted under compulsion. The following is his evidence:—"Two days afterwards, the three regiments of Infantry and the Second Light Cavalry surrounded us, and imprisoned the Nana and myself in the Treasury, and plundered the Magazine and Treasury of everything they contained, leaving nothing in either. Of the treasure, the Sepoys made over two lacs and eleven thousand rupees to the Nana, keeping their own sentries over it. The Nana was also under charge of these sentries, and the Sepoys which were with us also joined the rebels. After this the whole army marched from that place, and the rebels took the Nana Sahib and myself and all our attendants along with them, and said, 'Come along to Delhi.' Having gone three coss from Cawnpore, the Nana said that as the day was far spent it was far better to halt there then, and to march on the following day. They agreed to this, and halted. In the morning the whole army told him (the Nana) to go with them towards Delhi. The Nana refused, and the army then said, 'Come with us to Cawnpore and fight there.' The Nana objected to this, but they would not attend to him. And so, taking him with them as a prisoner, they went towards Cawnpore, and fighting commenced there."

At Kullianpore, therefore, the Nana arrested the march of the mutineers to Delhi. It is not very clearly known what arguments and persuasions were used by him or his ministers to induce the mutinous regiments to turn back to Cawnpore. It is probable that, infirm of purpose, ductile, unstable, and wanting leaders with force of character to shape their plans, they were induced by promises of larger gain, to turn back to the place which they had quitted, and which lay, still with much wealth, at their mercy. Cawnpore had not been half gutted. And, perhaps, there were ties, of a better, or at least a tenderer kind, which lured some of the Sepoys, who were still men, back to their old haunts. In all such cases, it

1857. June 5. may be assumed that the mass of the soldiery huddle confusedly to their doom—objectless, rudderless, perplexed, and bewildered, not knowing what is to come. The blind impulse of the moment, perhaps a sudden contagion of fear, not the strength of a stedfast conviction, or a settled purpose, swept them along, like a flock of scared sheep on a dusty road.*

But there was no such want of purpose among those who swept the flock back to Cawnpore. There were teeming brains and strong wills and resolute activities among the people of the Bithoor Palace. It commonly happens that we know but little about the individual manhood which shapes events in the camps of our Native enemies. The chief actor is not always of the highest rank—he, in whose name the deeds, which make History, are done. And perhaps, we shall never know what foul promptings and instigations were the prologue of the great tragedy then about to be enacted. But from this time Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, stood forth in the eyes of men as our arch enemy; and with him were Balla Rao and Baba Bhut, his brothers; the Rao Sahib, his nephew; and Tantia Topee, who had been his playfellow in former days, and had grown into his counsellor and his guide. And ever by his side, linked to him by bonds of pitiless hatred for the English, the astute Mahomedan, Azimoollah, the sometime table-servant of an English master, who had pleaded the Nana's cause in England and made love to English ladies. He had played his game so well that no one had suspected him. Only a few days before the regiments had broken into rebellion, he had been in friendly and familiar intercourse with English officers, veiling his hatred under the suavity of his manners and the levity of his speech. 1857.

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* The Mutiny of the Bengal Army is still described by Natives of India as the "Sheeps' Mutiny."

June 6. The attack threatened.

But as day dawned on Saturday, the 6th of June,* Wheeler was startled by the receipt of a letter from the Nana Sahib, intimating that he was about to attack the entrenchments. The supposed departure of the Sepoys to Delhi had inspired the General and his companions with new hopes. It would be easy for them, they thought, in a little while, to drop down to Allahabad. But this pleasant dream was now rudely broken. The rebellious soldiery were returning to Cawnpore, strengthened in numbers by the retainers of the Nana, and still more invigorated by the identification with the rebel cause of men of influence and energy, able to keep together the scattered atoms of revolt, and to organise a great movement against the English. The blow fell heavily upon the brave old General; on soldiers and civilians; on officers and men; heavily upon all who clung to them for protection. There was not an hour to be lost. Forth went the mandate for all the English to concentrate themselves within the entrenchments. The women and children and non-combatants were already there—and those on duty in the garrison; but many of the Sepoy officers had slept or watched in the Sepoys' lines, and had gone thence to their own bungalows; and now they were summoned without a moment's pause or respite to the earthworks, with no time to snatch a hasty mouthful of food, to collect a change

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* Captain Mowbray Thomson ("Story of Cawnpore") says that it was on Sunday the 7th, but Colonel Williams, who collated all the evidence on record, says it is proved that the mutineers returned to Cawnpore on the 6th. The Red Pamphlet gives the 6th as the date of the return of the troops to Cawnpore, and the 7th as the date of the receipt of the Nana's letter. This might explain the discrepancy; but Captain Thomson speaks of the two incidents as synchronous, and Mr. Trevelyan adopts this view.

1857. June 6.

of clothes for the morrow, and scarcely to apparel themselves for the work of the day. Leaving their household gods, which they had hoped still to preserve, they obeyed, promptly but regretfully, the orders of their chief, and hurried into the entrenchments. Soon every one was at his post. It was a miserable place for defensive purposes, but such as it was, the best dispositions were made for its defence. And every man braced himself up for the work before him, with clenched teeth and a stern resolution to show what English manhood could do to prevail against the fearful odds to which it was opposed.

Approach of the Enemy.

And whilst our people were thus manning the several posts which had been marked out for the defence of our feeble earthworks, the enemy were surging onwards in confused numbers towards the entrenchments; but eager rather for plunder than for battle, they turned aside to gorge themselves with the spoil, in city and cantonment, which lay profusely at their mercy, and to murder all the defenceless Christian people who fell in their way.* The question of proprietorship disturbed them little. Not content with the pillage of the Feringhees, many enriched themselves at the expense of their own countrymen, and some at least straightway deserted the ranks of the rebel army and made their way to their own homes. But enough remained, after all defections, thoroughly to invest our position—and more, perhaps, than could be brought under effectual command and control. Organisation, however, was not wholly neglected. In the name of the Nana Sahib, promotions and appointments were made in the army of the Peishwah. The Soubahdar, Teeka Singh, who had been from the commencement the most active promoter of revolt, received the command of the cavalry, with the rank of General; whilst Jemadar Dulgunjun Singh and Soubahdar Gunga Deen were appointed to the command, as Colonels, of infantry regiments. The names of these dignitaries will suggest the fact that the chief commands were given to Hindoos. But whether, as has been supposed, this proceeded from the belief that "the boldest and most active of the mutineers were not Mussulmans, but Hindoos,"* or whether it were that the prejudices and predilections of the Mahratta Brahmin, who was recognised as the rebel leader, wrought strongly in favour of his co-religionists, can only be conjectured. 1857. June 6.

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* "An old gentleman, supposed to be a merchant, with his wife and two children, one a boy of sixteen, the other a little girl, on being found secreted in a house near the dawk-bungalow, were shot in front of it. Four office-writers, living in a house on the bank of a canal . . . their house being set on fire, were obliged to abandon it, and were murdered as they fled. Another European (unknown) was shot by the troopers, who were indefatigable in their search after Christians."—*Col. Williams's Synopsis.*

The Attack commenced.

For some hours after the first alarm, the little garrison waited and waited; and there was no sound of the threatened attack. But about noon the booming of the cannon told that the enemy had commenced their operations. A round-shot from a nine-pounder came into our entrenchments, scaring and scattering a large party of ladies and children, who were gathered together outside the barracks. Then the bugle sounded; and our fighting men got to their posts, and prepared themselves for the unequal conflict. As the day advanced, shot after shot from the enemy's guns was poured in with increasing rapidity and deadliness of aim, and with the sound of every shot arose the screams of the women and the children. On that first day of the siege the

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* See Mr. Trevelyan's interesting volume, "Cawnpore." The suggestion is contained in Colonel Williams's Synopsis of Evidence.

1857. June 6. unaccustomed horror tore down all barriers of self-restraint. But soon this human weakness, which vented itself in the shrill utterances of fear, passed away from these helpless ones; and in its place there was an unnatural stillness, more pathetic than the wailings of grief and the clamorous outbursts of terror.

June 6—27. The Siege. Then commenced a siege, the miseries of which to the besieged have never been exceeded in the history of the world. All the wonted terrors of a multitudinous enemy without, of a feeble garrison and scant shelter within, of the burden of women, and children, and sick people, with little to appease their wants or to allay their sufferings, were aggravated by the burning heat of the climate. The June sky was little less than a great canopy of fire; the summer breeze was as the blast of a furnace. To touch the barrel of a gun was to recoil as from red-hot iron. It was the season when European strength and energy are ever at their lowest point of depression; when military duty in its mildest form taxes the powers of Englishmen to the utmost, and English women can do little more than sustain life in a state of languid repose, in shaded apartments, with all appliances at command to moderate the temperature and to mitigate the suffering. But now, even under the fierce meridian sun, this little band of English fighting men were ever straining to sustain the strenuous activity of constant battle against fearful odds; whilst delicate women and fragile children were suddenly called to endure discomforts and privations, with all the superadded miseries peculiar to the country and the climate, which it would have been hard to battle with, in strong health, under their native skies. The morning and evening baths, the frequent changes of raiment, the constant ministrations of assiduous servants in the smallest things, which are the necessities of English life in India, were now suddenly lost to these helpless ones; and, to intensify the wretchedness, the privacy and seclusion so dear to them became only remembrances of the past. Even amidst the roar of the cannon and the rattle of the musketry, with death around them in many ghastly shapes, the loss of these privileges was amongst the heaviest of their trials, for it violated all the decencies and proprieties of life, and shocked the modesty of their womanly natures.

To the English soldier in India to be outmatched in numbers is scarcely a discouragement. Ever since, a century before, Clive had fought against heavy odds the great battle of Plassey, our English forces had ever been outnumbered in the field, and yet they had fought their way to empire. The overwhelming multitude of Sepoys which now encompassed our position at Cawnpore, were kept at bay by the little handful of English soldiers that now manned our feeble entrenchments. As men, all the mighty host of Hindoos and Mahomedans which the Nana Sahib sent against us were utterly contemptible in our eyes. Had the positions of the two nations been reversed, had the English been outside those paltry earthworks, one rush would have carried the place, and the whole garrison would have been put to the sword in an hour. There was nothing to keep the besiegers out of the entrenchments but the contrast between the indomitable pluck of the Few and the flaccid irresolution of the Many. The besiegers, who might have relieved each other every hour, who might have

1857. June 6—27. bathed, and eaten, and smoked, and slept whilst their comrades were on duty, and sent any number of fresh troops to the assault, shrank from a close encounter with our weary people, overworked and underfed, ever labouring in the trenches, ever under fire, with the clothes rotting on their backs, and the grime from the guns caking on their hands and faces. But, poor and despicable as the enemy were, they were rich and royal in their possessions. They had an immense wealth of artillery. The Cawnpore Magazine had sent forth vast supplies of guns and ammunition.* And now the heavy ordnance of the Government was raking its servants with a destructiveness which soon diminished our numbers working in the trenches. The English artillerymen dropped at their guns, until one after another the places of our trained gunners were filled by volunteers and amateurs, with stout hearts but untutored eyes, and the lighter metal of their guns could make no adequate response to the heavy fire of their twenty-four-pounders. But, when the enemy neared our parapets, and sought further to molest us at close quarters, they met with such a reception as soon put them to panic flight.

Captain Moore. In these encounters there was one man ever conspicuous—ever in the front of the battle—inspiring and animating all who served under him by his lustrous example. This was Captain Moore, of the Thirty-second—a soldier of a commanding presence, light-haired and blue-eyed, whom no toil could weary, no danger could daunt. Wounded at the commencement of the siege, he went about with his arm in a sling; but the strong spirit within him defied pain. Day and night he laboured on, now in the trenches, now heading desperate sorties against the enemy, but even when he ceased to hope, he neither fainted nor failed. There was no greater heroism than this English captain's in all the war from first to last—no name more worthy than his to be recorded in the rolls of our English chivalry. 1857. June 6—27.

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* And in addition to the guns and stores taken from the Magazine, were other supplies of both found at the Ghaut, which were about to be despatched to Roorkhee.

But though ever in the heroic annals of the siege this fair-haired captain must hold the foremost place as the Agamemnon of the defence, there were other heroic deeds than his worthy of distinguished record —other brave men whose names should find fitting mention in the page of history. There was Vibart, Major of the Second Cavalry, who held the Redan, slackening not, day or night, in his exertions, and though ever under the merciless fire of the enemy, active and robust to the last. There was Whiting, Captain of the Bengal Engineers, who commanded at the north-west point of the entrenchments, a man of stout heart and clear brain. There was Jenkins, Captain of the Second Cavalry, described as "one of the bravest and best of our party," who held one of our outposts beyond the trenches with unflinching gallantry, till a bullet through the jaws, from the musket of a Sepoy who was feigning death, brought his services to an agonising end. There was Mowbray-Thomson, Subaltern of the Fifty-sixth, who "had the miserable satisfaction" of avenging, on the spot, the death of his friend—a soldier ever to be found where danger was hottest, of whose deeds the world would have known more if any other pen than his had chronicled the events of the siege; now holding, with a few followers, a perilous outpost, now heading a desperate sortie against merciless odds, he

1857. June 6—27. exposed himself to death in every shape, but he seemed to bear a charmed life.* And there was his friend and comrade to the last, Delafosse of the Fifty-third, a young hero, equal to any feat of heroic daring. One day a shot from the enemy's battery had blown up a tumbril and set fire to the woodwork of the carriage, in the place where our ammunition was stored. It was clearly seen, both by the insurgents and by our own people, that if the fire were not extinguished there would soon be a most disastrous explosion. So the Sepoy batteries poured in a deadly stream of eighteen and twenty-four pound shot. But unmoved by these messengers of death, Delafosse went forth, threw himself down beneath the blazing carriage, tore off the burning wood with his hand, and throwing dry earth upon the fire, stifled it before it could spread. Then there was Sterling, the dead shot, who, perched up in a sort of crow's-nest on the barrack-wall, which Delafosse had improvised for him, picked off single Sepoys with unerring aim, and became a scourge to our assailants; and Jervis of the Engineers, who, with indomitable pride of race, refused to run from a black fellow, and was shot through the heart whilst walking across the open in stern composure, with the pingings of the hostile bullets, and the imploring cries of his comrades to save himself, sounding in his ears. There was Ashe, too, the stout gunner from Lucknow, who served his nine-pounders, to the admiration of the whole garrison and to the terror of the besiegers, with unfailing courage and constancy from day to day, pouring in round after round with astonishing rapidity,

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* Mr. Trevelyan very felicitously says of him, "This officer did his best to lose a life which destiny seemed determined to preserve, in order that England might know how, in their exceeding distress, her sons had not been unmindful of their ancient honour."

1857. June 6—27.

and after each discharge leaping on to the heel of his gun, and, regardless of the danger of exposure, taking a new sight, and dealing out new death in the direction most disastrous to the enemy. And there were many other soldiers so good and true in the hour of our great national need, that History deplores its insufficiency to do full justice to the individual heroism of all the mighty defenders of those miserable works.

Gallantry of Civilians.

Nor were these great and glorious manifestations of the consummate bravery of our people confined to those who were combatants by profession. There were many in the entrenchments, not bred to arms, who started suddenly into stalwart soldiers. Among them were some railway engineers, potent to do and strong to endure, who flung themselves into the work of the defence with unstinting self-devotion, and made manifest to their assailants that they were men of the warrior caste, although they wore no uniforms on their backs. Conspicuous among them was Mr. Heberden, who was riddled with grape-shot, and lay for many days, face downwards, in extreme agony, which he bore with unmurmuring fortitude until death came to his relief.* And not the least heroic of that little band of heroes was the station-chaplain, Mr. Moncrieff, who went about ministering to the sick and the wounded, offering the consolations of religion to all who were passing away from the scene, and with that "access of unexpected strength" derived from prayer sustaining the toilers in the entrenchments, who turned aside for a little while from their ghastly work to listen to the sweet promises of the Gospel.

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* Not until the close of the siege. "He was carried on a mattrass down to the boats, where he died."

1857. June 6—27. Womanly endurance.

And never since war began, never "in the brave days of old," of which poets delight to sing, when women turned their hair into bow-strings, has the world seen nobler patience and fortitude than clothed the lives and shone forth in the deaths of the wives and daughters of the fighting-men of Cawnpore. No bow-strings were used in this defence; our arrows were of another kind. They went forth from the roaring mouths of our guns in the shape of round-shot and grape and canister. But when these missiles fell short, or by reason of the damage done to our pieces by the heavy artillery of the enemy, could not be used in the form from which they were issued from the expense-magazine, the gentlewomen of Cawnpore gave up perhaps the most cherished components of their feminine attire to improvise the ordnance most needed.* It would take long to tell in detail all the stories of womanly self-devotion and patient endurance and calm courage waiting for the end. Among these heroines was Mrs. Moore, the true-hearted wife of the leader of the garrison. All the officers who fought under him had for her a tenderness equal to his own, and they "fitted up for her a little hut, made of bamboo and covered with canvas," where "she would sit for hours, bravely bearing the absence of her husband while he was gone on some perilous enterprise."† Many others, perhaps, suffered more. The pangs of child-birth came upon some in the midst of all this drear discomfort and painful publicity. Some saw their

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* "In consequence of the irregularity of the bore of the guns, through the damage inflicted upon them by the enemy's shot, the canister could not be driven home; the women gave us their stockings, and having tapped the canisters, we charged them with the contents of the shot-cases—a species of cartridge probably never heard of before."—*Mowbray-Thomson's Narrative.*

† Mowbray-Thomson's Narrative.

1857. June 6—27.

children slowly die in their arms; some had them swept away from their breasts by the desolating fire of the enemy. There was no misery which humanity could endure that did not fall heavily upon our English women. It was the lot of many only to suffer. But those who were not prostrate, or in close attendance upon their nearest and dearest, moved about as sisters of charity, and were active in their ministrations. Nor was there wanting altogether the stalwart courage of the Amazon. It is related that the wife of a private of the Thirty-second, named Bridget Widdowson, stood sentry, sword in hand, for some time over a batch of prisoners tied together by a rope; and that the captives did not escape until the feminine guard had been relieved by one of the other sex.

The burning of the Barrack.

After the siege had lasted about a week a great calamity befel the garrison. In the two barracks of which I have spoken were gathered together all the feeble and infirm, the old and the sick, the women and the children. One of the buildings, it has been said, had a thatched roof, and whilst all sorts of projectiles and combustibles were flying about, its ignition could be only a question of time. Every effort had been made to cover the thatch with loose tiles or bricks, but the protection thus afforded was insufficient, and one evening the whole building was in a blaze. The scene that ensued was one of the most terrible in the entire history of the siege; for the sick and wounded who lay there, too feeble and helpless to save themselves, were in peril of being burnt to death. To their comrades it was a work of danger and difficulty to rescue them; for the enemy, rejoicing in their success, poured shot and shell in a continuous stream upon the burning pile, which guided their fire through

1857.
June 6—27.

the darkness of the night. Two artillerymen only perished in the flames. But the destruction of the barrack was a heavy blow to the besieged. It deprived numbers of women and children of all shelter, and sent them out houseless to lie day after day and night after night upon the bare ground, without more shelter than could be afforded by strips of canvas and scraps of wine-chests, feeble defences against the climate, which were soon destroyed by the unceasing fire of the enemy. And there was a worse result even than this. The conflagration destroyed all the resources upon which our people had relied for the mitigation of the sufferings of the sick and wounded. All our hospital stores and surgical instruments were lost to us; and from that time Death and Pain had their way without anything to arrest the one or to soften the other.

There was another result of this conflagration, of which little or no notice has been taken by the chroniclers of the Siege. It has been narrated that a few faithful Sepoys cast in their lot with their white officers, and accompanied them within the entrenchments. It appears that they were told that they might find shelter in this barrack, and we may assume that they littered down in the verandahs. There was one old Native officer, the Soubahdar-Major of the Second Cavalry, who from the first had arrayed himself against the mutineers of his regiment, and had received the reward of his great loyalty to the English in the wounds which he carried off with him to the entrenchments. And this reward was soon supplemented by another. Death came to the brave old man whilst still clinging to his former masters. He was killed in the early part of the siege by a

Bhowany Singh.

shell.* The Fifty-third Regiment is stated to have sent ten Native officers, with Faithful Sepoys, into General Wheeler's camp. All the other regiments contributed their quota to the garrison, and there is evidence that during the first week of the siege they rendered some service to the English. But when the barrack was destroyed, there was no place for them. Provisions were already falling short, and although there was no reason to mistrust them, it was felt that they were rather an encumbrance than an assistance. So they were told that they might depart; and as, although there was danger beyond the entrenchments, there was greater danger within them, they not reluctantly perhaps turned their faces towards their homes. Some perished by the way; some succeeded in reaching their native villages; a few returned, after a time, to the British Camp, to detail their experiences of the early days of the siege.†

Mortality in the Garrison.

Day after day passed, and ever as our little garrison

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* This is the man of whom previous mention has been made (page 302) as the one Sepoy of the old disgraced Second Cavalry that had been re-enlisted. It is to be hoped that good provision has been made for the family of so brave a man and so faithful a servant.

† "The Major having gone to inquire of General Wheeler what we were to do, the latter came out and ordered us to occupy the hospital barracks; he said, 'In such a barrack we shall not manage to save our lives, as the round-shot will reach us from all sides.' . . . On the evening of the 9th or 10th, a hot round-shot fell on our barrack and set it on fire. On this we left it, and concealed ourselves for the night in a nullah not far distant." "We held the hospital barracks from the 5th to the 9th or 10th; we left because the house caught fire from the enemy's shot. I believe the shot was wrapped in some inflammable material, which catching the thatched roof, soon became a blaze."—(*Deposition of Bhola Khan, Sepoy Fifty-third Native Infantry.*) "The barracks caught fire about four o'clock P.M., on the 9th or 10th. The Major then told us he could do nothing for us, there being an order of General Wheeler prohibiting any Native from entering the entrenchment. He therefore recommended us to provide for our own safety. . . . The whole party then left the hospital barrack."—(*Deposition of Ram Buksh, Pay-Havildar, Fifty-third Native Infantry.*) The number of these Sepoys is supposed to have been about eighty or a hundred, with a considerable proportion of Native officers.

1857. June 6—27. waned weaker and weaker, the fire of the enemy grew hotter and hotter. With what terrible effect it told upon our suffering people in the entrenchments, on brave fighting men, on patient women, and on poor little children, has been narrated by one of the survivors with a simplicity of pathos which goes straight to the heart. Incidents, which in ordinary times would have been described with graphic minuteness of detail, have been told in a few words as events of such common occurrence, as scarcely to have excited a sensation in the garrison. If the "burra sahib," or great lord of the district, to whom a few weeks before all Natives would have crouched, were shot dead in an instant, or the commandant of a regiment, whose word had been law to a thousand armed men, were disabled by agonising wounds, it was the talk of the entrenchments for a quarter of an hour, and then a new tragedy brushed it away. In truth it did not much matter at what moment death came. Happiest those, perhaps, to whom it came soonest. Hillersdon, the Collector, who had negotiated the alliance with the Nana Sahib, fell a corpse at the feet of his young wife, with his entrails torn out by a round shot. A few days' afterwards she was relieved from the ghastly memories of her bereavement by a merciful fall of masonry, which killed her. The General's son and aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Wheeler, was lying wounded in one of the barrack-rooms, when, in the presence of his whole family, father, mother, and sisters, a round shot boomed into the apartment, and carried off the young soldier's head. Another round shot struck up splinters into Major Lindsay's face, gashing and blinding him. He lingered on in darkness and in agony for some days, attended by his wife, when Death took him, and she soon followed. Colonel Williams,

BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE

June 6—27.

of the Fifty-sixth, being disabled by a wound early in the siege, died of apoplexy from sunstroke, leaving his wife and daughters in the entrenchments. The former, shot in the face and frightfully disfigured, lay for some days, tended by her wounded daughter, until death came to the suffering widow's relief. Colonel Ewart, of the First, who would have taken an active part in the defence if he had been spared, was disabled at an early period, but lingered through the siege, attended by his admirable wife, only to be brutally murdered at the end of it. Captain Halliday was shot dead carrying from the barracks to the entrenchments a little horse-soup, which he had begged for his famishing wife. Thus many of Wheeler's chief officers were rendered powerless for good by the unceasing fire of the enemy, whilst the old General himself issued orders from the shelter of the barracks, but was seldom capable of taking part in the active duties of the defence. In bitterness of spirit he saw his garrison diminishing every day before his eyes. There was a well a little way outside the entrenchments, which served as the general cemetery of the Christian people; and night after night the carnage of the day was carried to this universal mausoleum. And there were some who died hopelessly, though not in the flesh; for the horrors of the siege were greater than they could bear, and madness fell upon them, perhaps as a merciful dispensation.

Chastisement of the enemy.

It is impossible to compute the aggregate of death which our people dealt back to the enemy in return for these visitations. It is known that in the space of three weeks the English consigned to the well two hundred and fifty of their party. The number of bodies buried by the insurgents, or devoured by the

1857. June 6—27. vultures and jackals, must have been counted, if ever counted at all, at this amount many times told. If hands were scarce in the entrenchments, muskets were not; and every man stood to his work with some spare pieces ready-loaded, which he fired with such rapidity that the enemy marvelled when they thought of what was supposed to be the number of our garrison. But it was not only from the entrenchments that death went forth to greet our assailants. Incidental allusion has been made to our outposts. There was a row of unfinished barracks at one corner of our position, which it was of immense importance to us to possess, in whole or in part, lest the enemy should hold them against us, and make sad havoc within our miserable earthworks. There were in all eight of these buildings. Two the English contrived to occupy, and between these two was a third, with the well attached in which we buried our dead, and which we saved from the grasp of the enemy. From the shelter which we thus held, and which must have given good command over two sides of our entrenched position, our people poured in a deadly fire on the insurgents, whenever they approached our works. Conspicuous among the defenders of these outposts, as has already been told, were Jenkins and Mowbray-Thomson; and to these good names should be added that of Lieutenant Glanville, of the Second Bengal Europeans, who held with sixteen men "Number Two" barrack, described as the key of our position, until he was incapacitated by a dangerous wound.* From the barracks, or carcasses of barracks, thus gallantly held, such punishment was inflicted upon the enemy, as even after a lapse of years could not be remembered by any one living to look back upon it without a shudder. Here was the hardest work, and hence came the greatest carnage.[*] Any adventurous Sepoy coming within the reach of our rifles or muskets, paid the penalty of his audacity, and never troubled us or disported himself any more. Sometimes, if a favourable opportunity presented itself, our little garrisons made bold sallies into the open, spiking the enemy's guns and cutting off all who fell in their way. It was not of much use; for whether guns were spiked or men were killed, there were so many of both in the background, that the loss was scarcely felt for a moment. Indeed, the ranks of the besiegers were recruited from time to time, as the siege went on, amongst others by the Sepoys from Azimgurh,[†] and the new hands were often found to be better than the old. To us, on the other hand, the loss of every man was a grievous calamity, for we waited and waited for succours that never came; and though sometimes our people were stimulated by the belief that firing was to be heard in the distance, intimating the approach of reinforcements, they were soon driven back again upon disappointment and despair. 1857. June 6—27.

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* He was succeeded in the command by Mowbray-Thomson.

The incidents of one day much resembled those of another, both in what was done and what was suffered. Few landmarks broke the uniformity of that great expanse of glorious disaster. One day, however, at Cawnpore, as in other places where the great struggle for empire was going on, differed from the rest; for it was the centenary of the battle of Plassey. On June 23. Centenary of Plassey.

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[*] "The orders given to us were not to surrender with our lives, and we did our best to obey them, though it was only by an amount of fatigue that in the retrospect now seems scarcely possible to have been a fact, and by the perpetration of such wholesale carnage that nothing could have justified but the instinct of self-preservation, and, I trust, the equally strong determination to shelter the women and children to the last moment."—*Mowbray-Thomson.*

[†] The Seventeenth Native Infantry.

1857. June 23. the previous night there had been signs of extraordinary activity in the enemy's ranks, and a meditated attack on our outposts had been thwarted by Moore's fertility of resource;* and as the morning of the 23rd dawned upon Cawnpore, the insurgents, stimulated to the utmost by the associations of the day, came out in full force of Horse, Foot, and Artillery, flushed with the thought of certain success, to attack both our outposts and our entrenchments. If the whole strength of the Nana's force was not brought forth to surround us on this memorable day, all its components were fully represented. And there was a stern resolution, in many cases strengthened by oaths on the Ganges-water or the Koran, to destroy the English or to die in the attempt. The excitement of all branches of the rebel-army was at its highest pitch. The impetuosity of the Cavalry far exceeded their discretion, for they galloped forward furiously within reach of our guns, and met with such a reception, that many horses were left riderless, and the troopers who escaped wheeled round and fled in fearful confusion. The Infantry, more cautious, improvised moving ramparts to shelter their skirmishers, by rolling before them as they advanced huge bales of cotton; but our guns were too well

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* The following illustrative anecdote, told by Mowbray-Thomson, claims insertion in this place: "We saw the Pandies gathering to this position from all parts, and fearing that my little band would be altogether overpowered by numbers, I sent to Captain Moore for more men. The answer was not altogether unexpected. 'Not one could be spared!' Shortly afterwards, however, the gallant captain came across to me in company with Lieutenant Delafosse, and he said to me, 'Thomson, I think I shall try a new dodge; we are going out into the open, and I shall give the word of command as though our party were about to commence an attack.' Forthwith they sallied out, Moore with a sword, Delafosse with an empty musket. The captain vociferated the words, 'Number one to the front.' And hundreds of ammunition pouches rattled on the bayonet sheaths as our courageous foes vaulted out from the cover afforded by heaps of rubbish, and rushed into the safer quarters presented by the barrack walls."

1857. June 23.

served to suffer this device to be of much use to the enemy, for some well-directed shots from our batteries set fire to these defences, and the meditated assault was defeated before it had developed itself into action. The attack on the outer barracks was equally unsuccessful. The enemy swarmed beneath our walls, but were saluted with so hot a fire from Mowbray-Thomson and his companions, that, in a little time, the seventeen had laid one more than their number dead at the doorway of the barrack. The great assault of the Centenary of Plassey, which was to have humbled the Feringhees to the dust, and to have revenged the victory of Clive, was in the issue a disastrous failure. The enemy begged to be permitted to bury their dead; and the remains of their cotton-bales served to stop the gaps in the earthworks of the English. But there was a more deadly foe than this weak and disordered crowd of Hindoos and Mahomedans to be encountered by our distressed people; and the Nana Sahib saw another source of victory than that which lay in the number of his fighting men.

Approaches of Famine.

For hunger had begun to gnaw our little garrison. Food which in happier times would have been turned from with disgust, was seized with avidity and devoured with relish. To the flesh-pots of the besieged no carrion was unwelcome. A stray dog was turned into soup. An old horse, fit only for the knackers, was converted into savoury meat. And when glorious good fortune brought a Brahminee bull within the fire of our people, and with difficulty the carcase of the animal was hauled into the entrenchments, there was rejoicing as if a victory had been gained. But in that fiery month of June the agonies of thirst were even greater than the pangs of hunger. The well from which our scant supplies of water were

1857. June.

drawn was a favourite mark for the Sepoy gunners. It was a service of death to go to and fro with the bags and buckets which brought the priceless moisture to the lips of our famished people. Strong men and patient women thirsted in silence, but the moans of the wounded and the wailings of the children it was pitiable to hear. The bheesties, or professional water-carriers, were soon slain in the exercise of their calling, and then English soldiers addressed themselves to the hazardous work of ministering at the well. A brave-hearted civilian, John Mackillop, appointed himself captain of the well, and, after a week of this hazardous service, was shot down at his post. As he lay dying, his care was still for those in whose cause he had yielded up his life, and he besought, almost with his last breath, a stander-by to carry the precious fluid to the lady to whom it had been promised. And so as day by day our people were wasting under these dire penances of hunger and thirst, the hopes of the Nana grew higher and higher, and he knew that the end was approaching.

The Capitulation. June 25.

Three weeks had now nearly passed away since the investment had commenced—three weeks of such misery as few, since sorrow entered the world, have ever been condemned to suffer. No reinforcements had come to their assistance. The looked-for aid from below seemed now to be a grim delusion. Their numbers were fearfully reduced. Their guns were becoming unserviceable. Their ammunition was nearly expended; and starvation was staring them in the face. To hold their position much longer was impossible. To cut their way out of it, with all those women and children, was equally impossible. The shadow of a great despair was over them. When thus, as it were, at the last gasp, there came to them a message from the Nana Sahib, brought by the hands of a Christian woman. It was on a slip of paper in the handwriting of Azimoollah, and it was addressed "to the subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria." "All those who are in no way connected"—so the document ran—"with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, and are willing to lay down their arms, shall receive a safe passage to Allahabad."*

1857. June 25.

There was not a soldier in garrison who did not recoil from the thought of surrender—who would not have died with sword or musket in hand rather than lay down his arms at the feet of the treacherous Mahratta. Sir Hugh Wheeler lifted up his voice against capitulation. To the English General the bitterness of death was as nothing to the dishonour of abandoning his post. He had not yet given up the hope of relief from the lower country, and he mistrusted the Nana of Bithoor. The younger officers were all for fighting it out to the last; but Moore and Whiting, whom the General consulted in this conjuncture, reluctantly declared themselves in favour of capitulation. They had no thought for themselves. Had there been only men in the entrenchments, they would have counselled and clung to the nobler and the manlier course. But when they thought of the women and children, and of what might befall them in the hands of the enemy, they turned hopefully to

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* There are contrary statements with respect to the identity of the messenger. Some say that it was Mrs. Greenaway, some Mrs. Jacobi. Mr. Trevelyan speaks of it as an "important point." But I cannot say that I think it is of much use to discuss, or of consequence to determine, the question.

1857. June 25. whatsoever promised deliverance from the horrors of the past and the greater horrors that might be in the future. There was, too, a great crowd of sick and wounded, who could not be abandoned, and yet who could not be carried off in the face of an opposing enemy. So the overtures of the Nana Sahib were not rejected; and the messenger carried back to the enemy's Camp an announcement that Wheeler and his chief officers were deliberating upon the offer that had been made to them.

June 26. Next morning (there was then an armistice) Azimoollah and Jowalla-Persaud presented themselves near our entrenchments, and Captain Moore and Whiting, accompanied by Mr. Roche, the Postmaster, went out with full powers to treat with the emissaries of the Nana. It was then proposed that the British should surrender their fortified position, their guns, and their treasure, and that they should march out with their arms and sixty rounds of ammunition in each man's pouch. On his part, the Nana was to afford them safe conduct to the river side, and sufficient carriage for the conveyance thither of the women and the children, the wounded and the sick. Boats were to be in readiness at the Ghaut to carry them down the Ganges, and supplies of flour (some added "sheep and goats also") were to be laid in for the sustenance of the party during the voyage to Allahabad. These proposals were committed to paper and given to Azimoollah, who laid them before his chief, and that afternoon a horseman from the rebel camp brought them back, saying that the Nana had agreed to them, and that our people were to evacuate the entrenchments on that very night.

Against this Wheeler protested; and the draft-treaty was returned with an intimation that it was impossible to march out until the morning. Then the enemy began to gasconade and to endeavour to intimidate our people. They might as well have threatened to move the Himalayahs. Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, sent word that he knew exactly the state of our defences, the condition of our guns, and the scarcity of our provisions; that he would open fire at once upon our wretched place of refuge, and that in a few days not a man would be alive. Whiting and Mowbray-Thomson went out to meet the Bithoor emissaries, and the former replied, as became a lion-hearted Englishman, that they might carry our entrenchments, if they could; that their soldiers had generally shown greater alacrity in retiring from than in advancing towards our fortifications, and that we had, at all events, abundance of powder in our magazine to blow up both armies together. This determined language had its effect. The Nana consented to wait till the morrow. And a gentleman named Todd, who had been his English tutor, carried the treaty to the Rajah's quarters, at the Savada Kotee, and obtained his signature to it. 1857. June 26.

The Nana is represented to have been very courteous to his old preceptor. It was the time, indeed, for serenity of manner and suavity of demeanour—nay, indeed, for kindly and compassionate utterances and mollifying assurances. So, also, when Jowalla-Persaud, with two others, went over as hostages to the British entrenchments, he blandly condoled with the British commander, expressed his sorrow that the old General should have suffered so much—that after half a century of service with the Sepoy Army of the Company they should turn against him at the close of his life. But God be praised, it was now all over—deliverance was at

1857. June 26—27.

hand. Every care would be taken that the English gentlemen and their families should not be molested on their way to the river. And the companions of Jowalla-Persaud talked to others in the same polite and almost obsequious strain. That night our guns were made over to the enemy, and some of the old Golundauze of the Company were placed in charge of them.

The massacre at the Ghaut. June 27.

So forth from their entrenchments, in the early morning, went the remnant of our garrison, with the women and the children, who had outlived the horrors of the siege—gaunt and ghastly, in tattered garments, emaciated and enfeebled by want, worn by long suffering, some wounded and scarred with the indelible marks of the battle upon them. The river was distant only a mile from our starting-point. But to them it was a long and a wretched journey. The wounded were carried mostly in palanquins. The women and children went in rough native bullock-carriages or on the backs of elephants, whilst the able-bodied marched out on foot with but little semblance of martial array, Moore as ever in the van, and Vilbart bringing up the rear of the funeral procession. The veteran Wheeler, with his wife and daughters, is said to have walked down to the boats.* With what faith and hope within him, the

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* This is very distinctly stated by Mowbray-Thomson: "Poor old Sir Hugh Wheeler, his lady, and daughters, walked down to the boats." Other accounts, of a more circumstantial, but perhaps not more trustworthy character, indicate that the ladies were conveyed to the Ghaut on an elephant, and that the General himself went in a palanquin. This is the statement of Mr. Trevelyan, who very carefully collated all the evidence that has been produced. Colonel Williams, in his synopsis, says, "Hassim Khan, the rider of General Wheeler's elephant, after taking Lady Wheeler and her two daughters to the first boat on the line, returned for the General, whom meeting on the way mounted on a galloway, he likewise conveyed to the boats." The Christian wife of a musician of the Fifty-sixth regiment, named Bradshaw, says: "General Wheeler came last in a palkee (palanquin). They carried him into the

1857. June 27.

poor old man turned his face towards the Ghaut, He alone who reads the secrets of all hearts ever knew. But there were many in that woe-begone train who, although there was no sunshine on their faces, had glimmerings in their hearts of a peaceful future, and who were fain to carry with them as they went such of their household gods as they had saved from the great wreck, or little memorials of the past, relics, perhaps, of departed friends, to be treasured after long years in the old home beyond the seas. Little was all they could take with them, weighed against what they had left behind; parents, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, children, friends. The beautiful had left their beauty, the young had left their youth, in those battered barracks; and even the children had old and wizened faces, which told that they had lived long years in the last miserable month.

The place of embarkation was known as the Suttee Choura Ghaut, so called from a ruined village hard by which bore that name. The road ran across a wooden bridge, painted white, which reminded a traveller, who afterwards visited the spot, "of a bit in a Surrey common."* Over this bridge they defiled down into a ravine, which led past the compounds of some of our English residences to the Ghaut on the river-side. Near the Ghaut was a Hindoo temple,†

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water, near the boat. He said, 'Carry me a little further towards the boat;' but the Sowar said, 'No, get out here!' As the General got out of the palkee, head foremost, a Sowar gave him a cut with his sword in the neck, and he fell into the water. . . . My son was killed near him. I saw it, alas! alas!" Another statement is: "The General and some officers were on elephants—Mrs. Wheeler was in a palkee." The further the investigation is pursued, the greater the uncertainty that is left upon the mind. This is given as another instance of the difficulty of extracting the truth from a mass of conflicting evidence.

* Mr. Trevelyan: "Story of Cawnpore."

† "Small but in good repair, resembling nothing so much as those summer houses of a century back, which at the corners of old houses overhang Dutch canals and suburban English bye-ways."—*Trevelyan.*

1857. June 27. known as the Temple of Hurdeo, or the Fisherman's Temple, a structure of somewhat fanciful and not unpicturesque design. The incidents of this mile-march were not many. The Sepoys, as our wretched people huddled on towards the river, sometimes crowded round and talked to their old officers, uttering words of admiration or of compassion, which were not wholly feigned. But as everywhere the Sepoy stands out as a living inconsistency of the strangest kind, no one can read with surprise any story illustrating the malignant and cruel hatred that, at the same time, burned in the bosoms of some who had once served in our ranks. Among those who left the entrenchments on that June morning were Colonel and Mrs. Ewart, a brave and good man, with a wife every way worthy of him. He, sorely wounded, was carried on a bed or litter, and the lady walked axiously beside him. But their progress was slow; they fell in the rear before they had reached the bridge, and some Sepoys of his own regiment—the First—seeing his helpless condition, thus severed from his countrymen, came up to him and taunted him. Ordering the litter to be placed on the ground, they mocked and mimicked him, saying, "Is not this a fine parade, Colonel; is not the regiment well dressed up?" Saying which, they fell upon him with their swords and killed him; and though some made profession of not slaying women, Mrs. Ewart was presently cut down, and lay a corpse beside the body of her husband.

That the boats were ready on the river-side had been ascertained by a Committee of our own people; and when the dreary procession reached the appointed place of embarkation, the uncouth vessels were seen a little way in the stream, in shallow water;

for it was the close of the dry season, and the river was at its lowest. The boats were the ordinary eight-oared budgerows of the country—ungainly structures with thatched roofs, looking at a distance like floating hay-stacks, and into these our people now began to crowd without order or method, even the women with children in their arms, with but little help from others, wading knee-deep in the water, and scrambling as they best could up the sides of the vessels. It was nine o'clock before the whole were embarked, and some, Heaven only knows, for their voices are sealed, may have breathed more freely as they awaited the friendly order to push off and to drop down the stream towards the great goal of ultimate deliverance. But there were those on the river banks—those even in the boats themselves—who had far other thoughts, far other expectations. Every boat that had been prepared for our people was intended to be a human slaughter-house. They had not gone down to the banks of a friendly river that was to float them to safety. They had been lured to the appointed shambles, there to be given up to cruel death.

1857. June 27.

So foul an act of treachery the world had never seen. Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the last of the Peishwahs, had studied to some purpose the early history of his race. He knew how the founder of the Mahratta Empire—the head of the great family who had been the masters of the Peishwahs—had, under false pretext of friendly embrace, dug his wagnuck into the bowels of the Mahomedan envoy, and gained by foulest treachery what he could not gain by force. The wagnuck was now ready—the wagnuck of a thousand claws—in the hands of the man who aspired to be the founder of a

1857. June 27. new or renovated Mahratta Empire. Day after day, week after week, the English, with their little band of fighting men, had defied all the strength of this new confederacy, aided by the moral and material help of our lessons and our resources; and now the enemy, under the garb of a new-born friendship, was hiding the cruel weapon that was to destroy them. Everything was ready for the great carnage. Tantia Topee, who had been appointed master of the ceremonies, sat enthroned on a "chaboutree," or platform, of a Hindoo temple, and issued his orders to his dependents. Azimoollah, also, was there, and the brethren of the Nana, and Teekha Singh, the new Cavalry General, and others of the leading men of the Bithoor party. And many Zemindars from the districts, and merchants and lesser people from the city, are said to have gone forth and to have lined the river banks to see the exodus of the English; not knowing what was to come, and not all, perhaps, rejoicing in our humiliation. It looked like a great holiday-show. Scarcely is a more animated scene to be witnessed on the banks of the Thames on the day of our great national boat-race. And it was something even more than this, for there was a great military display. The soldiery had gone out in force —Horse, Foot, and Artillery; and the troopers sat their horses, with their faces turned towards the river, as though anxious for the sport to begin. And their patience was not long tried. The signal had been given, and the butchery was to commence.*

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* As Tantia Topee is here stated to have been the foremost agent in this hellish work, it will interest the reader to see the master-butcher's own account of the butchery: "The Nana," he declared, "got a female who had been captured before to write a letter to General Wheeler to this effect: that the Sepoys would not obey his orders, and that, if he wished, he (the Nana) would get boats and convey him and those with him in the entrenchment as far as Allahabad. An answer came from

No sooner were our people on board the boats, than the foul design became apparent. The sound of a bugle was heard. The Native boatmen clambered over the sides of the vessels and sought the shore. Then a murderous fire of grapeshot and musket-balls was opened upon the wretched passengers from both banks of the river; and presently the thatch of the budgerows, cunningly ignited by hot cinders, burst into a blaze. There was then only a choice of cruel deaths for our dear Christian people. The men, or the foremost amongst them, strenuous in action to the last, leaped overboard, and strove, with shoulders to the hulls of the boats, to push them into mid-channel. But the bulk of the fleet remained immovable, and the conflagration was spreading. The sick and wounded were burnt to death, or more mercifully suffocated by the smoke; whilst the stronger

1857.
June 27.

the General that he approved of this arrangement, and the same evening the General sent the Nana something over one lac of rupees, and authorised him to keep the amount. The following day I went and got ready forty boats, and having caused all the gentlemen, ladies, and children to get into the boats, I started them off to Allahabad. In the mean while, the whole army, artillery included, having got ready, arrived at the river Ganges. The Sepoys jumped into the water, and commenced a massacre of all the men, women, and children, and set the boats on fire. They destroyed thirty-nine boats; one, however, escaped as far as Kala Kunkur, but was there caught, and brought back to Cawnpore, and all on board of it destroyed. Four days after this the Nana said he was going to Bithoor, to keep the anniversary of his mother's death." This statement is at least partially true, and it might be suggested that the signal which Tantia Topee was seen to give was, according to his statement, a signal to start the boats. On this point, however, witnesses were examined and cross-examined with the same result. One said, "In my presence and hearing Tantia Topee sent for Teeka Sing, Soubahdar of Second Cavalry, known as a General, and gave him orders to rush into the water and spare none." Another said, "I was standing concealed in a corner, close to where Tantia Topee was seated, and I heard him tell Teeka Sing, a Soubahdar of the Second Cavalry, who was known as the General, to order the Sowars to go into the water and put an end to the Europeans, and accordingly they rushed into the river and murdered them." Other witnesses spoke distinctly to the same effect; one man adding, "All orders regarding the massacre, issued by the Nana, were carried into execution by Tantia Topee." I do not think that there can be the least doubt of the guilty activity of Tantia Topee in this foul deed.

1857. June 27. women, with children in their arms, took to the river, to be shot down in the water, to be sabred in the stream by the mounted troopers, who rode in after them, to be bayoneted on reaching land, or to be made captives, and reserved for a later and more cruel immolation. The fewest words are here the best. I should have little taste to tell the foul details of this foul slaughter, even if authentic particulars were before me. It is better that they should remain in the obscurity of an uncertain whole; enough that no aspect of Christian humanity, not the sight of the old General, who had nearly numbered his fourscore years, nor of the little babe still at its mother's breast, raised any feeling of compunction or of pity in these butchers on the river-side. It sufficed that there was Christian blood to be shed.

Whilst this terrible scene was being acted at the Ghaut, the Nana Sahib, having full faith in the malevolent activity of his lieutenants on the river-bank, was awaiting the issue in his tent on the cantonment plain. It is related of him that, unquiet in mind, he moved about, pacing hither and thither, in spite of the indolence of his habits and the obesity of his frame. After a while, tidings of the progress of the massacre were brought to him by a mounted trooper. What had been passing within him during those morning hours no human pen can reveal. Perhaps some slight spasm of remorse may have come upon him, or he may have thought that better use might be made of some of our people alive than dead. But whether moved by pity or by craft, he sent orders back by the messenger that no more women and children should be slain, but that not an Englishman was to be left alive. So the murderers, after butchering, or trying to butcher, the remnant of our fighting-men, stayed their hands and ceased from the slaughter; and a number of weaker victims, computed with probable accuracy at a hundred and twenty-five, some sorely wounded, some half-drowned, all dripping with the water of the Ganges and begrimed with its mud, were carried back in custody to Cawnpore, by the way they had come, envying, perhaps, those whose destiny had been already accomplished. 1857. June 27.

Escape of the Single Boat.

But among the men—survivors of the Cawnpore garrison—were some who battled bravely for their lives, and sold them dearly. Strong swimmers took to the river, but often sunk in the reddened water beneath the fire of their pursuers; whilst others, making towards the land lower down the stream, stood at bay on bank or islet, and made vain but gallant use of the cherished revolver in the last grim energies of death. There was nothing strange, perhaps, in the fact that the foremost heroes of the defence were the last even now to yield up their lives to the fury of the enemy. One boat held Moore and Vibart, Whiting and Mowbray-Thomson, Ashe, Delafosse, Bolton, and others, who had been conspicuous in the annals of that heroic defence. By some accident or oversight the thatch had escaped ignition. Lighter, too, than the rest, or perhaps more vigorously propelled by the shoulders of these strong men, it drifted down the stream; but Moore was shot through the heart in the act of propulsion, and Ashe and Bolton perished whilst engaged in the same work. The grape and round-shot from the Oude bank of the river ere long began to complete the massacre. The dying and the dead lay thickly together entangled in

1857. June 27. the bottom of the boat,* and for the living there was not a mouthful of food.

As the day waned it was clear that the activity of the enemy had not abated. That one drifting boat, on the dark waters of the Ganges, without boatmen, without oars, without a rudder, was not to be left alone with such sorry chance of escape; so a blazing budgerow was sent down the river after it, and burning arrows were discharged at its roof. Still, however, the boat was true to its occupants; and June 28. with the new day, now grounding on sand-banks, now pushed off again into the stream, it made weary progress between the two hostile banks, every hour lighter, for every hour brought more messengers of death.† At sunset, a pursuing boat from Cawnpore, with fifty or sixty armed Natives on board, came after our people, with orders to board and to destroy them. But the pursuers also grounded on a sand-bank; and then there was one of those last grand spasms of courage even in death which are seldom absent from the story of English heroism. Exhausted, famishing, sick and wounded, as they were, they would not wait to be attacked. A little party of officers and soldiers armed themselves to the teeth, and fell heavily upon the people who had come down to destroy them. Very few of the pursuers returned to tell the story of their pursuit. This was the last victory of the hero-martyrs of Cawnpore.* They took the enemy's boat, and found in it good stores of ammunition. They would rather have found a little food. Victors as they were, they returned to the cover of the boat only to wrestle with a more formidable enemy. For starvation was staring them in the face. 1857. June 28.

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* "The horrors of the lingering hours of that day seemed as if they would never cease. We had no food in the boat, and had taken nothing before starting. The water of the Ganges was all that passed our lips, save prayers, and shrieks, and groans. The wounded and the dead were often entangled together in the bottom of the boat; to extricate the corpses was a work of extreme difficulty, though imperatively necessary from the dreaded consequences of the intense heat and the importance of lightening the boat as much as possible."—*Mowbray-Thomson.*

† "At two P.M. we stranded off Nuzuffgurh, and they opened upon us with musketry. Major Vibart had been shot through one arm on the preceding day; nevertheless, he got out, and whilst helping to push off the boat was shot through the other arm. Captain Athill Turner had both his legs smashed. Captain Whiting was killed. Lieutenant Quin was shot through the arm; Captain Seppings through the arm, and Mrs. Seppings through the thigh. Lieutenant Harrison was shot dead. . . . . Blenman, our bold spy, was shot in the groin."—*Mowbray-Thomson.*

Sleep fell upon the survivors; and when they woke the wind had risen, and the boat was drifting down the stream—in the darkness they knew not whither; and some even then had waking dreams of a coming deliverance. But with the first glimmer of the morning despair came upon them. The boat had been carried out of the main channel of the river into a creek or siding, where the enemy soon discerned it, and poured a shower of musket-balls upon its miserable inmates. Then Vibart, who lay helpless, with both arms shot through, issued his last orders. It was a forlorn hope. But whilst there was a sound arm among them, that could load and fire, or thrust with a bayonet, still the great game of the English was to go to the front and smite the enemy, as a race that seldom waited to be smitten. So Mowbray-Thomson and Delafosse, with a little band of European soldiers of the Thirty-second and the Eighty-fourth, landed to attack their assailants. The fierce energy of desperation drove them forward. Sepoys and villagers, armed and unarmed, surged around them, but they charged through the astounded mul- June 29.

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* Mowbray-Thomson was one of these. Nothing can be more modest than this part of his narrative. "Instead of waiting for them to attack us, eighteen or twenty of us charged them, and few of their number escaped to tell the story."

1857. June 29.

titude, and made their way back again through the crowd of blacks to the point from which they had started. Then they saw that the boat was gone. The fourteen were left upon the pitiless land, whilst their doomed companions floated down the pitiless water.

The last Stand.

There was one more stand to be made by Mowbray-Thomson and his comrades. As they retreated along the bank of the river, seeing after a while no chance of overtaking the boat, they made for a Hindoo temple, which had caught the eye of their leader, and defended the doorway with fixed bayonets. After a little time they stood behind a rampart of black and bloody corpses, and fired, with comparative security, over this bulwark of human flesh. A little putrid water found in the temple gave our people new strength, and they held the doorway so gallantly, and so destructively to the enemy, that there seemed to be no hope of expelling them by force of arms. So whilst word went back to Dundoo Punt, Nana Sahib, that the remnant of the English Army was not to be conquered, the assailants, huddling round the temple, brought leaves and faggots, which they piled up beneath the walls, and strove to burn out the little garrison. Then Providence came to their help in their sorest need. The wind blew smoke and fire away from the temple. But the malice of the enemy had a new device in store. They threw bags of powder on the burning embers. There was now nothing left for our people but flight. Precipitating themselves into the midst of the raging multitude, they fired a volley and then charged with the bayonet. Seven of the fourteen carried their lives with them, and little else, to the bank of the river. There they took to the stream; but presently two of the swimmers were shot through the head, whilst a third, well nigh exhausted, making for a sandbank, had his skull battered in as soon as he landed. But the surviving four, being strong swimmers, and with heroic power in doing and in suffering, struck down the stream, and aided by the current, evaded their pursuers. Mowbray-Thomson and Delafosse, with privates Murphy and Sullivan, reached alive the territory of a friendly Oude Rajah, and survived to tell the story of Cawnpore. 1857. June 29.

Neglected Heroism. Teeming as it does with records of heroic exploits, this narrative of the Sepoy War contains nothing that surpasses—perhaps nothing that can justly be compared with—this wonderful episode of the last struggles of the martyrs of Cawnpore. The grand national courage, of the manifold developments of which it is impossible to write without strong emotion, has no nobler illustration than that of the last stand of the remnant of the Cawnpore garrison. A year before, England had made tardy reparation of past neglect by instituting an Order of Valour. It bears a name which renders it personally dear to the recipients of this generation, and will be cherished in historical ages yet to come. It was right that of such an order there should be but one class. But if there had been many classes, Mowbray-Thomson and Delafosse, Murphy and Sullivan, would have earned the highest decoration of which the order could boast. But, I know not by what strange omission, by whose neglect, or by what accident for which no one is responsible, it happens that not one of these heroes has borne on his breast the Victoria Cross. Doubtless, they are the representatives of a gigantic disaster, not of a glorious victory. But the heroism of failure is often greater than the heroism of success. And since the time when, in the days of early Rome, the

1857. June. Three kept the Bridge, there have been none more worthy of all the honour that a sovereign or a nation can bestow on the doers of brave deeds, than those who held the temple on the banks of the Ganges, and fought their way through an armed multitude thirsting for their blood, until from village to village there ran the cry that the Englishmen could not be beaten.

Fate of the boat's company.

Whilst the gallant Four, thus mercifully saved by what, humanly regarded, had seemed to be a summons to certain destruction, the companions from whom they had been severed were losing all hope of deliverance. What befel them after they drifted away, leaving Mowbray-Thomson and his little band of resolute fighting-men on the shore, can never be accurately known in detail. But the boat was overtaken, and all its living cargo carried back to Cawnpore, and turned out upon the well-known landing-place, where a great assemblage of Sepoys was ready to receive them. June 30. Some eighty Christian people in all had been brought back, after three days of agony and terror on the dark waters of the Ganges, too merciless to overwhelm them.* From the river bank they were driven, a miserable herd of men, women, and children, to the old cantonment, to await the execution of the orders of the Nana. He went out himself to gloat upon their sufferings. The men were doomed to death at once. The women and children, with greater refinement of cruelty, were suffered to survive their husbands and their fathers, and reserved for a second death. One English lady clung to her husband, and

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* Eighty is the number given by Mr. Sherer after very careful inquiry and collation of evidence. They were brought back on carts, and arrived at the Ghaut on the 30th of June.

1857. June 30.

perished. The rest were torn away, whilst the muskets of the Sepoys were loaded for that fatal fusillade. Then an English officer, who throughout all the accidents of that river voyage had preserved a prayer-book of the Church of England, sought permission to read to his doomed comrades a few sentences of that beautiful liturgy, whose utterances are never so touchingly appropriate as amidst the sorest trials and troubles of life. Leave was granted. And with one arm in a sling, whilst with the other he held the precious volume before his eyes, Seppings proclaimed to that doomed congregation the great message of salvation; and even amidst the roar and rattle of the musketry the glad tidings were still ringing in their ears, as they passed away to another world.

Then the women and children were sent to swell the crowd of captives, which these conquerors of the hour were holding still in store as a final relish for their feast of slaughter. All who had not been burnt, or bayoneted, or sabred, or drowned in the great massacre of the boats on the 27th of June, had been swept up from the Ghaut and carried to the Savada House, a building which had figured in the history of the siege as, for a time, the head-quarters of the rebel leader. And now these newly-made widows and orphans were added to the shuddering herd of condemned innocents.

July 1. The Nana proclaimed Peishwah.

This done, Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, carrying with him an infinite satisfaction derived from the success of his machinations, went off to his palace at Bithoor. Next day, in all the pride and pomp of power, he was publicly proclaimed Peishwah. No formality, no ceremony was omitted, that could give dignity to the occasion. He took his seat upon the throne. The sacrament of the forehead-mark was

1857. July 1. duly performed. The cannon roared out its recognition of the new ruler. And when night fell, the darkness was dispersed by a general illumination, and showers of fireworks lit up the sky. But it was not long before, even in the first flush of triumph, heaviness fell upon the restored sovereignty of the Peishwah. He was, after all, only a miserable tool in the hands of others. And news soon reached him that, in his absence from Cawnpore, his influence was declining. The Mahomedan party was waxing strong. It had hitherto been overborne by the Hindoo power, probably more than all else for want of an efficient leader. But there was a Mahomedan nobleman, known as the Nunny Newab, who had taken a conspicuous, if not an active, part in the siege. At the commencement of the outbreak he had been made prisoner by the Nana Sahib, and his house had been plundered; but subsequently they had entered into a covenant of friendship, and a command had been given to the Newab. He directed or presided over one of the batteries planted at the Racquet Court, driving down to it in his carriage, and sitting on a chair, in costly attire, with a sword at his side and a telescope in his hand; and there was no battery that wrought us greater mischief than the Nunny Newab's. He had got together some cunning Native artificers, who experimentalised on red-hot shot and other combustibles, not without damage to the lives of those working in the batteries; and it was a projectile from one of his guns—described as a ball of resin—which set fire to the barrack in the entrenchments. The Nana was so delighted with this exploit that he sent the Newab a present of five thousand rupees, and the story ran, that in the administrative arrangements which were to follow the extirmination of the

English, he was to be Governor of Cawnpore. Among the Mahomedans of the neighbourhood he was held in high estimation, and large numbers of followers attended him as he went down every day to his battery. 1857. July.

And now there was some talk of setting up the Newab as head of the new Government. If this had been done there would have been faction fights between Hindoos and Mahomedans, which would have weakened the power of the general enmity to the Christian races, and hastened the day of retribution. Then other disturbing rumours reached him. The English reinforcements were advancing from Allahabad—hot for revenge, eager for blood. The story ran that the white soldiers were hanging every Native who came in their way. It was plain that the time for strenuous action had come. A great fear was settling down upon the minds of the inhabitants of Cawnpore, who were leaving their homes in the city and seeking refuge in the villages; and the military classes, as is ever their wont at such times, were clamouring for donatives, and declaiming against the parsimony of the Nana. To send forth assuring and even boastful addresses alike to the citizen and to the soldier, was his first care in this month of July;* and it was necessary, without delay, to issue largesses in money, and in the alluring shape of those much-coveted gold bangles, the thought of which, ever since the commencement of the siege, had stimulated the activity of the Sepoys.

So the Peishwah of the hour was summoned back to Cawnpore by the lieutenants whom he had left to govern in his absence. He established himself in an edifice, of goodly proportions, which had been built July 6.

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* Some of these will be found in the Appendix.

1857. July 6. for an hotel by a Mahomedan capitalist; and here he held high carnival. The native gossips of the day related how, after the fashion of the East, he strove to drown the cares and anxieties which gathered round him, with music, and dancing, and buffoonery in public; and that he solaced himself, in more retired hours, with strong drink and the caresses of a famous courtesan. Day after day his scouts brought exaggerated stories of the advance of the English battalions; and he issued instructions to his officers to go out to meet them. He had put forth astounding proclamations to assure the people that the pride of the English had been humbled to the dust, and that their armies had been overwhelmed by more powerful nations, or, by God's providence, drowned in the sea. There was no lie which Doondoo Punt and his lieutenants had not put forth, in some shape or other, to assure the minds of the people and to make men believe that there was nothing now to be hoped or feared from the prostrate Feringhees. But ever, as the month of July wore on, news came from below that the English were advancing; and the Peishwah trembled as he heard, even in the midst of his revelries. There was, however, one more victory to be gained before the collapse of the new Mahratta power on the banks of the Ganges. And the Nana smiled as he thought that the game was all in his own hands.

The captives in the Beebee-ghur.

It was only a victory over a number of helpless women and children—a victory safe and easy. The English prisoners had been removed from the Savada Kotee to a small house, which had been built by an English officer for his native mistress (thence called the "Beebee-ghur"); but had more recently been the residence of a humble Eurasian clerk. There was scanty accommodation in it for a single family. In this wretched building were now penned, like sheep for the slaughter, more than two hundred women and children. For the number of the captives had by this time been increased by an addition from a distance. Whilst our Christian people at Cawnpore had been suffering what has been but dimly portrayed in the preceding pages, there had been a great crisis at Futtehgurh, the British military station adjacent to the city of Furruckabad, in the district of that name. It lies on the right bank of the Ganges, eighty miles above Cawnpore. In the first week of June, after nearly a month of extreme anxiety, it had become apparent that the lives of all the Europeans, and they were many, would be sacrificed if they continued to dwell at Futtehgurh. So, not knowing in the first week of June the true position of affairs at Cawnpore, a large number of our people took to their boats and drifted down to the great British cantonment, as to a place of refuge. The story of Futtehgurh must be told in another chapter of this narrative. It is enough that it should be related here that those who descended the river were attacked on the way, and that when one boat reached the neighbourhood of Cawnpore the Nana Sahib's people captured it, dragged out its unhappy inmates, and carried them, bound, to the feet of their master. Then there was a slaughter, in his presence, of all the men, three excepted; and the women and children were carried off to swell the miserable crowd in the "Beebee-ghur."

1857. July 7–15.

This new prison-house lay between the Native city and the river, under the shadow of the improvised palace of the Peishwah, within sound of the noisy music, and within sight of the torch-glare which sig-

1857.
July 7—15.

nalised his highness's nocturnal rejoicings.* Thus huddled together, fed upon the coarsest provender of the country, doled out to them by sweepers, their sufferings were intolerable. Cholera and diarrhœa broke out among them, and some were mercifully suffered to die.† If, in the agony and terror of this captivity, bereft of reason, any one of these sufferers anticipated, by action of her own, the day of doom, God will surely take merciful account of the offence. The horror of a fouler shame than had yet come upon them may have crazed more intellects than one. But there was in this no more than a phantom of the imagination. Our women were not dishonoured save that they were made to feel their servitude. They were taken out, two at a time, to grind corn for the Nana's household. An educated English gentle-

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* The following minute description of the "Beebee-ghur" is from a private journal kept by Major Gordon of the Sixty-first: "It was a dismal kind of bungalow in a small compound near what used to be the Assembly Rooms. There was a narrow verandah running along nearly the whole of the front. At the two ends of it were bathing-rooms, opening both into the verandah and into side-rooms. Then came an inner entrance room, and then one about sixteen by sixteen, and then an open verandah as in front. At either side was a narrow room. . . . It was, in fact, two small houses, built on exactly the same plan, facing each other, and having a space enclosed between them."

† Mr. Trevelyan, referring to a diary kept by a Native doctor who visited the prisoners, says, "There is a touching little entry which deserves notice. In the column headed 'names' appears the words 'ek beebee' (one baby), under that marked 'disease' is written 'ap se,' of itself." As a "beebee" is not a baby, but a lady or woman, I attributed this error to the writer's brief residence in India, but I find the passage is taken from Mr. Sherer's official report, a document of the highest value. I must still, however, hold to the opinion that "ek beebee" means one lady, and I should have thought that the pathos of the "ap se" lay in its meaning that she killed herself, if it were not for a suspicion that in Sherer's report "beebee" is a misprint for "baba." I have not seen the original list, but it was translated by Major Gordon, who was on General Neill's Staff. This officer wrote down in his journal, at the time, most of the names. "From the 7th," he says, "to the morning of the 15th, twenty-eight people died; nine cholera; nine diarrhœa; one dysentery; three of wounds; one, an infant two days old; five, disease not mentioned. I could not make out all the names, but those of which I am sure are" . . and then a list is given, including, under date July 10, "A baby of two days old—of itself." This seems to be conclusive.

1857. July 7—15.

woman needed not even a week's residence in India to teach her the meaning of this. As they sat there on the ground, these Christian captives must have had some glimmering recollection of their biblical studies, and remembered how in the East the grinding of corn was ever regarded as a symbol of subjection—how, indeed, it was one of the crowning curses of the first great captivity on record.* When the wives of the English conquerors were set to grind corn in the court-yards of the Mahratta, the national humiliation was then and there complete—then, but only for a little while; there, but only on a little space. And the pathos of the picture is perfected when we see that these delicate ladies, with their faces to the grindstone, did not find the office so wholly distasteful, as it enabled them to carry back a little flour to the "Beebee-ghur" to feed their famishing children.

So here, just under the windows of the Nana Sahib, was a very weak, defenceless enemy, which might be attacked with impunity and vanquished with ease. But, with that other enemy, which was now advancing from Allahabad, and, as the story ran, destroying every one in their way, the issue of the contest was more doubtful. A great body of Horse and

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* Some, perhaps, may have called to mind, in this hour of humiliation, the awful appropriateness of the forty-seventh chapter of Isaiah, and mostly of these solemn words:—"Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground. . . . . . for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. . . . . Thou saidst, 'I shall be a lady for ever,' so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore, hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, 'I am and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood. . . . Evil shall come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off, and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly."

1857. July 7—15. Foot, with a formidable array of guns, had gone down to dispute the progress of the British; but, before the month of July was half spent, news came that they had been disastrously beaten. Havelock had taken the field in earnest. The hopes of his youth, the prayers of his manhood, had been accomplished; he had lived to command an army, to gain a victory, and to write a despatch in his own good name.

⁂ At the close of this chapter, I must express my obligations to the printed volumes of Captain Mowbray-Thomson and Mr. Otto Trevelyan. The reminiscences of the one writer and the investigations of the other have been equally serviceable to me. But to no one am I more indebted than to Colonel Williams for the invaluable mass of oral information which he has elicited and placed on record, and the admirable synopsis which accompanies it. From an immense pile of conflicting evidence, I believe that, guided by Colonel Williams, I have extracted the truth. There are still, however, some doubts and uncertainties as regards points of detail, especially in respect of the numbers both of the fighting men in the entrenchments and of the women and children in the "Beebee-ghur." The discrepancy with respect to the former may have arisen from the circumstance that in some lists the sick were computed, but not in others. Colonel Williams gives a nominal roll of European troops composing the English portion of the Cawnpore garrison who were killed between the 6th and 30th of June. In this we have the names of fifty-nine Artillerymen, seventy-nine men of the Thirty-second, forty-nine of the Eighty-fourth, and fifteen of the Madras Fusiliers—making in all two hundred and two, exclusive of officers. Mr. Sherer's numbers differ from these—his aggregate being a hundred and sixty-four. With regard to the women and children in the "Beebee-ghur," I think that Major Gordon's estimate is most probably correct. He says, after studying the list of prisoners, "It appears from this that two hundred and ten were left on the 11th, and as twelve died between that and the 15th, there must probably have been a hundred and ninety-seven when the massacre took place.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL HAVELOCK AT ALLAHABAD — EQUIPMENT OF THE BRIGADE — ADVANCE TOWARDS CAWNPORE—JUNCTION WITH RENAUD—THE BATTLES OF FUTTEHPORE, AONG, AND CAWNPORE—THE MASSACRE OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN—RE-OCCUPATION OF CAWNPORE.

ASSURED of the miserable fact that Cawnpore had fallen, General Havelock, having halted Renaud's column at Lohanga, was eager to advance to join him and to push on for the recovery of the important position that we had lost, and the chastisement of the insolent enemy. He telegraphed to Sir Patrick Grant at Calcutta, saying: "We have lost Cawnpore, an important point on the great line of communication, and the place from which alone Lucknow can be succoured; for it would be hardly possible, at this season of the year, to operate on the cross-roads. My duty is, therefore, to endeavour to take Cawnpore, to the accomplishment of which I will bend every effort. I advance along the trunk-road as soon as I can unite fourteen hundred British Infantry to a battery of six well-equipped guns. Lieutenant-Colonel Neill, whose high qualities I cannot sufficiently praise, will follow with another column as soon as it is organised, and this fort is left in proper hands."* 1857. July.

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* Marshman's Life of Havelock.

1857. July 4—7. Preparations for the March.

Havelock had hoped to commence his march on the 4th of July, but the impediments in the way of the complete equipment of his force were too numerous and too serious to admit of so early a movement. All the old difficulties, of which I have already spoken, were in his way, and it was not until the sun was dimly declining on the 7th that he could give the order to march. It was but a small force for the work before it. A thousand European Infantry soldiers, belonging to four different regiments, composed the bulk of Havelock's army. Some of these were seasoned soldiers, but some were raw recruits. Then there were a hundred and thirty of Brazier's Sikhs, a battery of six guns, and a little troop of Volunteer Cavalry, mustering only eighteen sabres, but in the hands of such men worth their number five times told. Among them were young officers, whose regiments had revolted,* and civilians whose cutcherries were closed; and as they rode out, badly mounted (for Palliser's Irregulars had taken the best horses), under their gallant leader, Captain Barrow of the Madras Cavalry, there was a large-hearted enthusiasm among them which made them feel equal to the encounter of any number of Native horsemen that could be brought against them. Nor should there be omission from the record of the fact that, when Havelock marched forth for the recovery of Cawnpore and the relief of Lucknow, he was accompanied by some of the best staff-officers with

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* "New to the country, new to the service, unaccustomed to roughing it, brought up in every luxury, and led to believe that on their arrival in India they would have the same, these young officers (deprived of employment by the mutiny of their regiments) willingly threw themselves into the thick of the work, often without a tent or cover of any sort to shelter them from the rain or sun, with bad provisions and hard work. Side by side with the privates they took their turn of duty, and side by side with them they fought, were wounded, and some died."—*Quoted in Marshman's Life of Havelock. Author not stated.*

1857. July 7—12.

whom it has ever been the good fortune of a general to be associated. In Lieutenant-Colonel Fraser-Tytler and Captain Stuart Beatson he had a Quarter-Master General and an Adjutant-General of his brigade, selected by himself, not to be out-matched in efficiency by any officers of those departments.

March for Allahabad.

It was a dull, dreary afternoon when Havelock's Brigade marched out of Allahabad, and very soon the rain came down in torrents to damp the ardour of the advancing force. Neither on that day nor on the succeeding one was the progress rapid. Many of the men were unused to Indian marching, and numbers fell in the rear, weary, footsore, disabled. There was great discouragement in this; but as Havelock advanced, it became more and more apparent to him not only that Cawnpore had fallen, but that a large body of the enemy were advancing to meet him, and this rendered it not only expedient, but imperative, that no time should be lost in joining the advanced column. Neill, doubtful, as it has been seen, of the fall of Cawnpore, had telegraphed to Sir Patrick Grant, urging him to push on Renaud's column, and Renaud was moving forward into the clutches of the Nana's force; and though Havelock's knowledge of the inestimable value at such a time of English life and English health rendered him careful of his men, he now recognised a paramount emergency overruling these considerations, and sped onwards by forced marches to overtake his Lieutenant. And an hour after the midnight of the 11th—12th of July, in the broad light of an unclouded moon, his foremost details came up with Renaud's detachment. Before dawn the junction was completed. Renaud drew up his men along the side of the road; and as the Highlanders struck up the stirring strain of the

1857. "Campbells are coming," welcomed the new arrivals with ringing cheers. Then they marched on together, and about seven o'clock the whole force halted at Belindah, a spot some four miles from the city of Futtehpore.*

July 12. The Battle of Futtehpore.

The troops were weary and footsore, and Havelock was eager to give his men the rest and refreshment they so much needed. So arms were piled, and our soldiery were preparing for the morning meal, when their hungry hopes were disappointed by the unexpected arrival of a twenty-four-pound shot, which well-nigh reached the feet of the General. The truth was soon apparent. Colonel Tytler had gone forward with an escort to reconnoitre, and some spies, despatched by Lawrence from Lucknow, had brought him word that the enemy were at Futtehpore. There was no more thought of the breakfast. The battle was before them. The men stood to their arms and fell in at the word of command, and, forgetful of the long and weary night-march just ended, set their faces towards the camp of the enemy, and strode on, steady and stern, to meet them.

They soon met. For the enemy, thinking that they had come up with the advanced column only, under Major Renaud, swept forward with an insolent front, confident of victory. Conspicuous before all were the troopers of the Second Cavalry, who came on menacingly in an extended line, as though eager to enclose our little band in the toils of a swift destruction. So Havelock, as he wrote, unwilling "to be bearded, determined at once to bring on an action." Then the truth became miserably apparent to the enemy; and in an instant the light of proud defiance paled beneath the astounding disclosure. The weak detachment, that was to have been so easily overwhelmed, had suddenly grown, as though under the hand of Shiva the Destroyer, into a strong, well-equipped, well-handled force of all arms, advancing to the battle with a formidable line of guns in the centre. Flushed with the savage memories of the past, and eager for fresh slaughter, these bloodhounds of the Nana Sahib had rushed upon their prey only to find themselves brought face to face with death. Surprise, disappointment, fear, trod down even the brutal instincts within them, and the paralysis of a great reaction was upon them. The fight commenced. It was scarcely a battle; but it was a consummate victory. Our Enfield rifles and our guns would not permit a conflict. The service of the Artillery was superb. There had come upon the scene a new warrior, of whom India had before known nothing, but whose name from that day became terrible to our enemies. The improvised battery of which Havelock made such splendid use was commanded by Captain Maude of the Royal Artillery. He had come round from Ceylon, with a few gunners, but without guns; and he had gone at once to the front as one of the finest Artillerymen in the world. The best troops of the Nana Sahib, with a strength of Artillery exceeding our own, could make no stand against such a fire as was opened upon them.* Falling back upon the

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* *Calcutta Review*, vol. xxxii., Article, "Havelock's Indian Campaign," written by one who took part in it. This writer, a very able one, says, "We shall not soon forget the scene. . . . We well recollect how anxious Major Renaud was to capture Futtehpore before Havelock reached us, it having been reported to us that it was defended only by a few matchlock-men. This was probably correct at the time, but the Nana, with his large force, was marching down upon it, and had we advanced not a soul would have lived to tell the tale; but Providence preserved us from a fate which at that time would have been ruinous to our power in India."

1857. July 12.

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* "The enemy's fire scarcely touched us," wrote Havelock; "ours for four hours allowed him no repose." "Twelve British soldiers

1857. July 12. town, with its many enclosures of walled gardens, they abandoned their guns one after another to our exhausted battalions; and after one vain rally of the rebel Horse, which solved the vexed question of the unworthiness of Palliser's Irregulars, gave up the contest in despair. Then Havelock again lamented his want of Cavalry; for he could not follow up, as he wished, his first brilliant success; and more of the rebel Sepoys escaped than was pleasing to the old soldier. But he had done his work well and was thankful; thankful to his troops for their gallant services; thankful to the Almighty Providence that had given him the victory; and proud of the great national character which was now so nobly reasserting itself.* It was the first heavy blow struck at the pride of the enemy in that part of the country. The glad tidings were received with exultant delight in every house and bungalow in the country. In due time England caught up the pæan; and the name of Havelock was written at the corners of our

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were struck down by the sun and never rose again. But our fight was fought neither with musket nor bayonet nor sabre, but with Enfield rifles and cannon: so we lost no men." This probably means no Europeans; for Havelock's biographer, after quoting the General's despatch, says, with reference to the conduct of the Irregular Cavalry at this time, that "only twelve followed their commanding officer, Lieutenant Palliser, whose blind confidence in his men and gallant spirit carried him headlong into the midst of the enemy (at Futtehpore), without a glance behind to ascertain if he were supported. Here he was overpowered and knocked off his horse, and would inevitably have been cut to pieces had he not been rescued by the devoted gallantry of his Native Ressaldar, who sacrificed his own life in endeavouring to save that of his leader."

* See Havelock's Order of Thanks issued next day to the troops under his command, in which he attributes the victory, with a sort of Cromwellian many-sidedness, "to the fire of British Artillery, exceeding in rapidity and precision all that the Brigadier has ever witnessed in his not short career; to the power of the Enfield rifle in British hands; to British pluck, that great quality which has survived the vicissitudes of the hour and gained intensity from the crisis; and to the blessing of Almighty God on a most righteous cause—the cause of justice, humanity, truth, and good government in India."

streets, on the sides of our public conveyances, and on the sign-boards over our houses of public entertainment.*

1857. July 12.

Futtehpore was given up to plunder. It was a guilty—a blood-stained city. A few weeks before it had risen in rebellion. And now the mark of a just retribution was to be set upon it. The story may be briefly told in this place. The Treasury-guard consisted of some sixty or seventy Sepoys of the Sixth Regiment. About the end of May, a large detachment of the Fifty-sixth, with some Sowars of the Second Cavalry—both of which regiments were then fast seething into rebellion at Cawnpore—arrived at Futtehpore with treasure from Banda, and passed on to Allahabad. What dark hints and suggestions may have passed between them can never be known. No great uneasiness was then felt by the European residents. The temper of the people did not seem to differ much from what it had been in more quiet times, and public business went on from day to day in the old groove without interruption.

The story of Futtehpore.

The Chief Civil Officer at Futtehpore was Mr. Robert Tudor Tucker, the Judge. He was a brother of the Commissioner of Benares. There were some strong resemblances between them. Both were de-

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* It appears from Tantia Topee's narrative, which on such a point as this may be trusted, that the Sepoys were anxious that the Nana should accompany them to Futtehpore. "The Nana refused," he said: "I and the Nana remained at Cawnpore, and sent Jowalla-Persaud, his agent, along with them to Futtehpore." Teeka Sing, the Second Cavalry General, accompanied him. The Allahabad Moulavee, also, appears to have been with the Nana's party at this time. One of the witnesses, whose depositions have been published by Colonel Williams, when asked, "Who commanded at the battle of Futtehpore?" answered, "I myself saw Teeka Singh, the General, and the Allahabad Moulavee, and Jowalla-Persaud, going off to command. Many others went—small fry of leaders."

1857. vout Christian men, earnestly and conscientiously treading the appointed path of official duty. People spoke of Henry Tucker as an enthusiast; but the enthusiasm of Robert Tucker had been roused to a still higher pitch by the intensity of his religious convictions, which, even from his schoolboy days up to the prime of his mature manhood, had been striking deeper and deeper root, in spite of all the discouragements and distractions of Eastern life. At the entrance to Futtehpore he had erected four pillars of stone, on two of which were engraved the Ten Commandments, in Persian and Hindee, and on the others, in the same characters, scriptural texts containing the essence of the Christian faith. There they stood, that he who ran might read, proclaiming to Hindoos and Mahomedans the cherished creed of the Feringhees; but no man defaced or insulted them. And the good Judge made no disguise of his efforts to convert the people; but still no man molested him. His kindness and liberality seem to have endeared him to all classes. They saw that he was just and gentle; merciful and self-denying; and that he taught lessons of love by the practice of his daily life. In very literal truth, he was what the Natives of India, often in exaggerated language, call a "poor man's provider." Wherever misery was to be found, his helping hand was present. The destitute and the sick were his children, in the absence of those endeared to him by the tenderest ties. For he was a husband and a father; but his family at this time were in England; and when the day of trouble came he rejoiced that he stood alone.

The storm burst on the 9th of June. The two great waves of rebellion, the one from Allahabad, the other from Cawnpore, met here with overwhelming force. Hindoos and Mahomedans rose against us; the latter, as ever, with the more cruel violence. The roving bands of Sepoys and Sowars and escaped gaol-birds, who were flooding the surrounding districts, wholly disorganised our police; and what was said to be a Mahomedan conspiracy was hatched in the very heart of the city. Then the dangerous classes seem to have bubbled up, and there were the usual orgies of crime. The Treasury was plundered. The prison-gates were broken open. The Record-office was burnt down. Other public offices were condemned to the same destruction. The Mission premises were attacked. And, when the European community gathered together in a barricaded house resolved that it would be utter madness to remain any longer at Futtehpore, for all authority was gone, all hope of maintaining any longer a semblance of Government utterly departed, they left the station by the light of blazing bungalows, and sallied forth to find themselves "amidst a perfect Jacquerie of the surrounding villages."* But they made their way across the Jumna to Banda, and were saved. 1857. June 9.

One Englishman stood fast. One Englishman could not be induced to quit his post, whatever might be the perils which environed him. As long as there was a pulse of life in his body, Robert Tucker believed that it was his duty to give it to the Government which he served. Throughout the day he had been most active in his endeavours to suppress crime and to restore order. Unlike his brother Henry, who had never fired a shot in his life, or carried a more formidable weapon than a riding-whip, the Futtehpore Judge armed himself, mounted his horse, and went out against the enemy, with a few horse-

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* Mr. Sherer to Mr. Chester, June 19, 1857. MS.

1857. June 9. men at his back. He left some rebels dead in the streets, and carried back with him some wounds upon his person.* His countrymen, when they turned their backs on Futtehpore, left him in the Cutcherry, still hoping against hope that he might weather the storm; and believing that, if this by God's Providence were denied to him, it was his duty alike to God and Man to die at his post.

The issue was soon determined. What followed the departure of his countrymen is but obscurely known. Of the one patent, miserable fact, that Robert Tucker was killed, there was never a moment's doubt. The story ran that at the head of the Mahomedan conspiracy, or if not at its very heart, was a well-known Native functionary—Deputy-Magistrate by office—Hikmut-oollah by name. He had received great benefits from Mr. Tucker, who had full faith in the man; and for some time it was believed that Mussulman treachery and ingratitude had culminated in the crowning crime of this man's life. "Poor Tucker," wrote Mr. Sherer, the Magistrate of Futtehpore, to Commissioner Chester, "was shot by Hikmut-oollah's orders, he himself reading out the Koran whilst the guns were fired. A Native Christian, Joseph Manuel, a servant of mine, was present when this took place." But many still doubt, if they do not wholly discredit, much that has been said of Hikmut-oollah Khan. He might have saved his benefactor, but did not. Perhaps he went with the stream, not having courage to oppose it. The crime may have

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* Mr. Clive Bayley, in his Allahabad report, says: "It is impossible not to admire, however much it might be regretted, the heroic devotion of the late Mr. Tucker; nor is it much a matter of wonder that his conduct and his personal prowess (Mr. Tucker was, I believe, more than once wounded early in the day) actually succeeded in preserving, for a few hours longer, some show of order."

1857. June 9.

been but negative. But History does not doubt that the Futtehpore Judge sold his life dearly on the roof of the Cutcherry. Resolutely and fiercely he stood at bay, loading and firing, loading and firing, until he had shot down many of his assailants. It is said that he was not overcome at last until the insurgents had fired the Cutcherry. And so the quiet Christian Judge, so meek and merciful in time of peace, giving unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, rose in the hour of war to the noblest heights of heroic daring, and died for the Government that he had served.

There were some, however, even in that guilty city, who viewed with horror and indignation the murder of the good Judge. And as the ruffians were returning from the Cutcherry, rejoicing in their cruel work, two Hindoos met them, and openly reviled them for slaying so just and righteous a man. Had he not always been the friend of the poor? But the murderers were in no mood to be rebuked. Furious before, they were infuriated to a still higher pitch by these reproaches. So they fell upon the witnesses and slew them.

The punishment of Futtehpore. July 12—13.

In Havelock's camp there was at this time one of the civil officers who had escaped, more than a month before, from Futtehpore. Mr. Sherer, the Magistrate, after many adventures, had made his way to Allahabad, and had thence marched upwards with the avenging army.* For five weeks anarchy and confusion had reigned throughout the district. The authority of the Nana Sahib had been nominally recog-

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* Mr. Willock had gone on, as civil officer, with Renaud's detachment. He had been very active during the crisis at Allahabad, and both then and afterwards had proved himself, in conflict with the enemy, to be a gallant soldier.

1857. July 12—13. nised, but in truth there was scarcely any semblance of Government. Every man stood up for himself, taking and keeping what he could. Along the line of Havelock's march, Sherer observed the significant symbols of a widespread desolation—telling afterwards the story of what he saw in one of the best of those admirable official narratives through which many of our foremost civilians have done so much for historical truth. "Many of the villages," he wrote, "had been burnt by the wayside, and human beings there were none to be seen. . . . The swamps on either side of the road; the blackened ruins of huts, now further defaced by weather-stains and mould; the utter absence of all sound that could indicate the presence of human life, or the employment of human industry, such sounds being usurped by the croaking of frogs, the shrill pipe of the cicala, and the under-hum of the thousand winged insects engendered by the damp and heat; the offensive smell of the neem-trees; the occasional taint in the air from suspended bodies, upon which, before our very eyes, the loathsome pig of the country was engaged in feasting;—all these things appealing to our different senses, combined to call up such images of desolation, and blackness, and woe, as few, I should think, who were present would ever forget."* And now in the city itself were silence and solitude scarcely less impressive and significant. The streets were deserted; but there were signs of recent habitation. In the shops and houses much wealth of plunder was left, which could not be removed in time by the affrighted owners beyond the reach of the despoilers. So now our soldiers, English and Sikhs, were let loose upon the place, and before the day was spent it had been sacked. Next morning, when the column moved on, the Sikhs were left behind, flushed with delight at the thought that to them had been entrusted the congenial task of setting fire to the town. 1857. July.

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* The other side of the picture should, in fairness, also be given. In the following we see some of the phenomena of the great revolt against civilisation which preceded the retribution whose manifestations are described in the text: "Day by day," says a writer in the *Calcutta Review*, "as we marched along, we had ample evidence of the certainty with which the Asiatic had determined to tear us out of the land, root and branch; the untiring malignity which had, not content with murder and mutilation, burned our bungalows and desecrated our churches only as an Asiatic can desecrate, we had witnessed, but we scarcely expected what we saw in passing along the road. There was satisfactory evidence that the genius of the revolt was to destroy everything that could possibly remind one of England or its civilisation. The telegraph wires were cut up, strewing the ground, and in some instances carried off, the

Battle at Aong. July 15.

On the 15th of July, Havelock, having on the preceding day dismounted and disarmed the Irregular Cavalry, whose treachery was undeniable, again came in front of the enemy. They had posted themselves in strength at the village of Aong, with something of an entrenchment in front, and on either flank some walled gardens, thickly studded with trees, which afforded serviceable shelter to their musketeers. But no superiority of numbers or of position could enable them to sustain the resistless rush of the English. Very soon they were seen in confused flight, strewing the ground as they fled with all the abandoned impedimenta of their camp—tents, stores, carriage, and munitions of war. But the cost of that morning's success was indeed heavy. For one of the best soldiers in the British camp was lost to it for ever. Major Renaud, who had charged at the head of the Madras Fusiliers—his beloved "Lambs"—was carried mortally wounded to the rear. Those who knew him best deplored him most; but the grief which

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telegraph posts were dug out, the bungalows burnt, and the poor unoffending milestones, so useful even to themselves, but still English, were defaced, and in many instances destroyed."

1857. July 15.

arose when it was afterwards known that he was dead was not confined to his old comrades of the Coast Army. He had already earned an Indian reputation.

Passage of the Pandoo-nuddee.

The day's work was not then over. A few miles beyond the village of Aong was a river to be crossed, known as the Pandoo-nuddee. It was but a streamlet in comparison with the Ganges, into which it flowed. But the July rains had already rendered it swollen and turbid; and if the bridge by which it was crossed had been destroyed by the enemy, Havelock's progress would have been most disastrously retarded. So, when his scouts told him that the enemy were rallying, and were about to blow up the bridge, he roused his men, exhausted as they were, and called upon them for a new effort. Nobly responding to the call, they pushed forward with unexpected rapidity. It was a two hours' march to the bridge-head under a fierce sun; but our weary people carried the energies of victory with them to the banks of the Pandoo-nuddee. The enemy, strengthened by reinforcements which had come in fresh from Cawnpore, under Bala Rao, the brother of the Nana, were entrenched on the other side with heavy guns, which raked the bridge. But Maude's battery was soon brought into action; and a favourable bend of the river enabling him so to plant his guns as to take the enemy in flank, he poured such a stream of Shrapnel into them that they were bewildered and paralysed, and, some say, broke their sponge-staffs in despair. They had undermined the bridge-head, and had hoped to blow the whole structure into the air before the English could cross the river. But there was not a cool head or a steady hand among them to do this work. And the Fusiliers, under Major Stephenson, with an expression on their stern faces not to be misunderstood, swept across the bridge, and put an end to all fear of its destruction. Then the rest of Havelock's force accomplished the passage of the river, and pushed on with their faces towards Cawnpore, weary and exhausted in body, but sustained by the thought of the coming retribution. 1857. July 15.

The last massacre.

They did not then know the worst. The crowning horror of the great tragedy of Cawnpore was yet to come. On the afternoon of that 15th of July, Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, learnt that Havelock's army had crossed the Pundoo-nuddee, and was in full march upon his capital. The messenger who brought the evil tidings was Bala Rao himself, with a wound in his shoulder, as proof that he had done his best. It might be that there was a coming end to the short-lived triumphs of the new Peishwah. What now was to be done? The chief advisers of the Nana Sahib were divided in opinion. They might make a stand at Bithoor, or form a junction with the rebel force at Futtehgurh, or go out to meet the enemy on the road to Cawnpore. The last course, after much confused discussion, was adopted, and arrangements were made to dispute Havelock's advance. The issue was very doubtful; but, as already said, the mighty conquerors of Cawnpore had one more victory to gain. They could slaughter the English prisoners. So, whether it were in rage, or in fear, or in the wantonness of bestial cruelty; whether it were believed that the English were advancing only to rescue the prisoners, and would turn back on hearing that they were dead; whether it were thought that as no tales can be told by the dead, the total annihilation of the captives would prevent the identification of the arch-offenders on

1857. July 15. the day of retribution; whether the foul design had its birth in the depths of the Nana's black heart, or was prompted by one still blacker, the order went forth for the massacre of the women and children in the Beebee-ghur. The miserable herd of helpless victims huddled together in those narrow rooms were to be killed. What followed is best told in the fewest and simplest words. There were four or five men among the captives. These were brought forth and killed in the presence of the Nana Sahib. Then a party of Sepoys was told off, and instructed to shoot the women and children through the doors and windows of their prison-house. Some soldierly instincts seem to have survived in the breasts of these men. The task was too hideous for their performance. They fired at the ceilings of the chambers. The work of death, therefore, proceeded slowly, if at all. So some butchers were summoned from the bazaars—stout Mussulmans accustomed to slaughter; and two or three others, Hindoos, from the villages or from the Nana's guard, were also appointed executioners.* They went in, with swords or long knives, among the women and children, as among a flock of sheep, and with no more compunction, slashed them to death with the sharp steel. 1857. July 15—16.

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* Some obscurity surrounds this terrible incident, and perhaps it is better that it should be so. Colonel Williams, to whose investigations History is so much indebted, says with respect to the evidence before him, that, "on approaching the last and most terrible scene, all seem instinctively to shrink from confessing any knowledge of so foul and barbarous a crime as the indiscriminate slaughter of helpless women and innocent children. Evidence that seems clear and strong from the 15th of May to the 14th of July, suddenly ceases on the fatal day of the 15th of that month." The most reliable testimony was that of some half-caste drummers or band-boys. But the principal witness, whose narrative is the most detailed, and seemingly the most authentic of all (John Fitchett, drummer of the Sixth Native Infantry), who stated that he had been a prisoner with our people, was clearly convicted of a direct falsehood in this respect; and it is only where his evidence was supported by others that it is to be entirely trusted. It should be stated here that the male prisoners, shot to death on the 15th of July, were three of the principal fugitives from Futtehgurh, and two members of the Greenaway family. The Sepoy-Guards at the Beebee-ghur, who refused to slaughter the women and children, belonged to the Sixth Regiment from Allahabad. The Nana is stated to have been so incensed by their conduct that he threatened to blow them from guns.

And there the bodies lay, some only half-dead, all through the night. It was significantly related that the shrieks ceased, but not the groans. Next morning the dead and the dying were brought out, ghastly with their still gaping wounds, and thrown into an adjacent well. Some of the children were alive, almost unhurt; saved, doubtless, by their low stature, amidst the closely-packed masses of human flesh through which the butchers had drawn their blades; and now they were running about, scared and wonder-struck, beside the well. To toss these infantile enemies, alive or dead, into the improvised cemetery, already nearly choked-full, was a small matter that concerned but little those who did the Nana's bidding. But beyond this wholesale killing and burying, which sickened the whole Christian world, and roused English manhood in India to a pitch of national hatred that took years to allay, the atrocity was not pushed. The refinements of cruelty —the unutterable shame—with which, in some of the chronicles of the day, this hideous massacre was attended, were but fictions of an excited imagination, too readily believed without inquiry and circulated without thought. None were mutilated—none were dishonoured. There was nothing needed to aggravate the naked horror of the fact that some two hundred Christian women and children were hacked to death in the course of a few hours.*

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* This is stated, in the most unqualified manner, by the official functionaries, who made the most diligent inquiries into all the circumstances of the massacres of June and July. Mr. Sherer and Mr. Thornhill, in their official reports, speak most distinctly in denial of the assertion that our women had been mutilated and dishonoured. Colonel Williams, than whom there can be no better authority, says that the most searching and earnest inquiries totally disprove the unfounded assertion, which was

1857. July 16. Battle of Cawnpore.

Then, this feat accomplished, the Nana Sahib and his allies prepared to make their last stand for the defence of Cawnpore and the Peishwahship. On the morning of the 16th, Doondoo Punt went out himself with some five thousand men—Horse, Foot, and Artillery—to dispute Havelock's advance. The position—some little distance to the south of Cawnpore—which he took up was well selected; and all through that July morning his lieutenants were disposing their troops and planting their guns. Meanwhile, Havelock and his men, unconscious of the great tragedy that, a few hours before, had been acted out to its close, were pushing on, under a burning sun, the fiercest that had yet shone upon their march. Exhausted as he was by the mid-day heats the English soldier toiled on, sustained by the thought that he might still rescue from destruction the two hundred women and children held in foul durance by the Nana. To faint or fail at such a time would have been, he thought, cowardice and crime. So weary and foot-sore, dizzy beneath the vertical rays of the meridian sun, and often tortured by parching thirst, he plodded along the baked road and panted for the coming encounter.

The hour of noon had passed before the English General learnt the true position of the enemy. It was plain that there was some military skill in the rebel camp, in whosesoever brain it might reside;

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at first so frequently made and so currently believed, that personal indignity and dishonour had been offered to our poor suffering countrywomen. To this it may be added, that some of the administrators of the Mutiny Relief Fund in England took great pains to investigate certain alleged cases of mutilation, said to have been brought over from India, but failed to track down a single one. The most authentic case of mutilation with which I am acquainted is one that comes to me from Ireland, whilst I am writing this chapter. Some wild Irishmen went into the house of a Mr. Connor, and, taking him for another man, against whom they had a grudge, deliberately cut off his nose.

for the troops of the Nana Sahib were disposed in a manner which taxed all the power of the British Commander, who had been studying the art of war all his life. To Havelock's column advancing along the great high road from Allahabad—to the point where it diverges into two broad thoroughfares, on the right to the Cawnpore cantonment and on the left, the "great trunk," to Delhi—the Sepoy forces presented a formidable front. It was drawn up in the form of an arc, bisecting these two roads. Its left, almost resting upon the Ganges, had the advantage of some sloping ground, on which heavy guns were posted; whilst its right was strengthened by a walled village with a great grove of mango-trees, which afforded excellent shelter to the rebels. Here also heavy guns were posted. And on both sides were large masses of Infantry, with the Second Cavalry in the rear, towards the left centre, for it was thought that Havelock would advance along the Great Trunk Road. When all this was discerned, it was plain that to advance upon the enemy's front would be to court a great carnage of the troops, upon the care of which so much depended. Havelock's former victories had been gained mainly by the far-reaching power of the Enfield Rifles and the unerring precision of Maude's guns. But now he had to summon to his aid those lessons of warfare—both its rules and its exceptions—which he had been learning from his youth upwards; and they did not fail him in the hour of his need. He remembered "old Frederick at Leuthen," and debouching to the right, advanced in open column against the enemy's left flank. The movement had its disadvantages, and had he been the paper-pedant, which some thought him, he might not have resorted to such a manœuvre. But its success 1857. July 16.

1857. July 16. proved the efficacy of the exception. He had fully explained the intended movement to his commanders. Standing in the midst of them, he had traced in the dust, with the point of his scabbard, the plan of operations, and had convinced himself that they thoroughly understood it. Then the order was given for the advance; and primed with good libations of malt liquor, they moved forward in column of subdivisions, the Fusiliers in front, along the high road, until they reached the point of divergence. Then the Volunteer Cavalry were ordered to move right on, so as to engage the attention of the enemy and stimulate the advance of the entire force, whilst the Infantry and the guns, favoured by the well-wooded country, moved off unseen to the right. The feint succeeded admirably at first. The Cavalry drew upon themselves the enemy's fire. But presently an open space between the trees revealed Havelock's designs, and the Nana's guns opened upon our advancing columns, raking the Highlanders and Sixty-fourth, not without disastrous effect. But nothing shook the steadiness of the advance. That hardest lesson of all to the British soldier, to reserve his fire, had been learnt to perfection by these brave fellows. The last subdivision having emerged from the wood, they were rapidly wheeled into line, and, to the consternation of the enemy, moved forward with a resolute front and disconcerted the arrangements on which the Nana had prided himself so much and so confidently relied. But the native legions had strong faith in the efficacy of their guns, which outmatched our own in number and in weight of metal. At that time we could not make fitting response, for Maude's battery was struggling through ploughed fields, and his draft-cattle were sinking exhausted by the way; and even when they came up, these light field-pieces, worked as well as guns were ever worked, could but make slight impression on the heavy ordnance from the Cawnpore magazine. 1857. July 16.

For a little space, therefore, the Sepoys exulted in the preponderance of their Artillery-fire, and between the boomings of the guns were heard the joyous sounds of military bands, striking up our stirring national tunes, as taught by English band-masters, and, as though in mockery, selecting those with the greatest depth of English sentiment in them. It was a dire mistake. As he caught the familiar sounds of "Cheer, boys, cheers!" the face of the British soldier settled down into that stern, compressed look, when the rigid jaw tells how the teeth are clenched and the muscles strung, and the heart is hard as a stone. The battle now was to be won by the pluck of the English Infantry. It was not a number of "mere machines" that Havelock was urging forward, but so many individual men with great hearts in their bosoms, every one feeling as if he had a personal wrong to redress. The awful work of charging heavy guns, well served by experienced gunners, was now to be commenced; and the Highlanders, led by Colonel Hamilton, took the post of honour, and were the first to charge. The shrill sounds of the pibroch from the bagpipes in the rear seemed to send them all forward as with the force of a catapult. The rush of the kilted soldiers, with their fixed bayonets, cheering as they went, was what no Sepoy force could withstand. Strongly posted as the guns were in a walled village, village and guns were soon carried, and there was an end to the strength of the enemy's left.

The Sepoy troops fled in confusion—some along

1857. July 16. the Cawnpore road, others towards the centre of their position, where a heavy howitzer was posted, behind which for a while they rallied. There was more work then for the British Infantry. A few minutes after their first grand rush they had gathered breath, and fallen again into orderly array. Then Havelock challenged them a second time with a few of those spirit-stirring words which, from the lips of a trusted general, are as strong drink to the weary soldier, and every man felt invigorated, and equal to any work before him. The Highlanders responded with a cheer, and, followed by the Sixty-fourth, flung themselves on the trenchant howitzer and the village which enclosed it, and again the burst was irresistible. The gun was captured, and the village was cleared.

For, just at this critical moment, the little body of Volunteer Cavalry, composed mainly of English officers, appeared upon the scene, flushed with a noble enthusiasm, resolute and dauntless, determined to show with their flashing sabres what they could do against any odds. Never was there a more heroic charge. It was the charge of but Eighteen. Captain Barrow led it. And among those who went into action was Captain Beatson, who had been struck down by cholera, and who was powerless to sit his horse; but, dying as he was, he could not consent to lose his chance of taking his part in the great act of retribution. So he placed himself upon a tumbril and was carried into action, and as dear life was passing away from him, his failing heart pulsed with great throbs of victory. The sabres of the Eighteen were less bright and sharp after they had encountered the enemy. When they drew rein, diminished in numbers—for horses and riders had been shot down—the Footmen of the British Army saluted them with a ringing cheer; and the General again and again cried, "Well done! I am proud to command you!" It was this body of "Gentlemen Volunteers," into which the "Bayard of the Indian Army"—James Outram—felt it, a month afterwards, a high privilege to enlist, when he might have commanded the whole of the force. 1857. July 16.

Whilst the Cavalry were thus covering themselves with glory, the Infantry swept on to the enemy's right, where two more guns were posted, and carried them with the irresistible ardour that takes no denial. But the enemy, having found fresh shelter in a wooded village, rallied with some show of vigour, and poured a heavy fire into our line. Weary and exhausted as our people were, they had lost none of the grand enthusiasm, which made every man a giant; and when the calm clear voice of the General was heard, inquiring who would take that village, the Highlanders bounded forward, as if they had newly come into action, and the rest responded with like alacrity to the appeal. Again the Sepoy host were swept out of their cover, and seemed to be in full retreat upon Cawnpore, as though the day were quite lost. But there was yet one more stand to be made. As gun after gun was captured by the rush of our Infantry, still it seemed ever that more guns were in reserve, far-reaching and well-served, to deal out death in our ranks. Baffled and beaten as he was, the Nana Sahib was resolute to make one more stand. He had a twenty-four pounder and two smaller guns planted upon the road to the Cawnpore cantonment, from which fresh troops had come pouring in to give new strength to the defence. It was the very crisis of the Peishwah's fate. Conscious of this, he threw all his individual energies into the work before him,

1857. July 16. and tried what personal encouragement could do to stimulate his troops. And he flashed his gaudy presence on his people in a last convulsion of courage and a last effort of resistance.

For there was at this moment a pause in our onward operations. The great tidal wave of British conquest seemed for a moment to be receding. Our gun-bullocks were utterly exhausted by the day's work, and could not bring our artillery to the front. Our Infantry soldiers, not less physically exhausted, though wonderfully sustained by the strong humanity within them, were lying down, partly to rest, partly to escape the tearing fire of the enemy. As they lay on the ground, they heard exultant noises in the enemy's camp. The clanging of the cymbals, the shrill blasts of the bugles, and the roll of the drums heard between the intervals of the artillery fire, told that there was unwonted excitement in the Sepoy ranks. It sounded like a boast and a menace; and it filled with fresh fury the breasts of our weary troops. Sights followed sounds rapidly. There was the bustle of a hostile advance. The Infantry were moving forward. The Cavalry were spreading themselves out as though to swoop down upon our little body of fighting men and to encompass them with swift destruction, whilst the guns continued to pour forth their round shot in an almost unintermittent stream. To the quick eye of the General it then appeared that there was not a moment to be lost. So he called upon his men to rise; and they leaped at once to their feet, stirred almost to madness by the taunts of the enemy. One more rush, and the victory, like those which had gone before, would be complete.

Then Havelock's eyes were gladdened by a sight which seemed to be a glorious response to all the dreams of his youth and all the prayers of his manhood. The Infantry prepared to advance right upon the death-dealing battery of the enemy, the Sixty-fourth Foot, led by Major Sterling, in front. At this moment the General's aide-de-camp—"the boy Harry"—wheeled his horse round to the centre of the leading regiment, and rode straight upon the muzzle of the twenty-four pounder, whose round shot had now been supplanted by grape, which was making deadly gaps in our advancing column. It was a moment of rapture to the white-haired veteran, compensating him for all disappointments and delays, for all unjust supersessions, for all professional discouragement, when he saw that last battery carried and knew that his son was safe. The work was well nigh done, when four guns of Maude's battery came up to complete it. A terrific fire was opened upon the beaten enemy, who were soon in confused flight; and, after such a day's fighting as might have tried to the utmost the powers of the best troops in the best of climates, they bivouacked at nightfall two miles from Cawnpore, every man too weary to need a pillow and too thirsty not to relish even a draught of dirty water. 1857. July 16.

They were then two miles from the cantonment, and next morning they marched on to occupy it. But ere they were under arms a dreadful story ran like a shudder along the line. They were too late to save: they had come only to avenge. Havelock's spies had brought in word that the captive women and children, whom they had hoped to rescue, had passed beyond the reach of human aid. The morning's news clouded the joy of yesterday's victory; and our men went on with heavy hearts to the scene of our recent national sorrows. The enemy had evacuated the place, leaving behind them only a body of horse to announce the July 17. Cawnpore re-occupied.

1857. July 17. exodus of the rebel force by blowing up the great magazine, the resources of which had constituted their strength, and given them six weeks of victory. As our advanced guard neared the Cawnpore cantonment, there was seen to rise from the earth an immense balloon-shaped cloud, and presently was heard a terrific explosion, which seemed to rend the ground beneath one's feet with the force of a gigantic earthquake. There was no mistaking such a proclamation; and as one man said to another, "There goes the magazine!" many, doubtless, thought how different it would have been if this exploit had not been left to our successors. By this one fatal omission all had been lost to us at Cawnpore.

But now the English flag was again hoisted, and Havelock, profoundly thankful to the Almighty disposer of events, who had given him the victory, put forth an eloquent, spirit-stirring "Order," in which the just meed of hearty commendation was given to the troops which had won his battles for him. "Soldiers," he said, "your General is satisfied, and more than satisfied, with you. He has never seen steadier or more devoted troops. Between the 7th and the 16th you have, under the Indian sun of July, marched a hundred and twenty-six miles and fought four actions." Such troops and such a General were worthy of each other. No troops fought better throughout the war, and none were ever better commanded. The last engagement, known as the Battle of Cawnpore, stamped Havelock's character as a military commander. The battle, as he wrote, "was won by God's blessing, *non vi sed arte.*" It was one of those triumphs of mind over matter, "by which man conquers man." We had everything against us. Numbers some five times told; a far greater strength of artillery; a commanding position, with strong natural defences—all favoured the enemy; whilst a climate more deadly to the exotic soldier than grape and canister, and heavy, broken ground, over which our exhausted cattle could not drag their guns, so as to bring them into action when most wanted, fearfully diminished the fighting powers of our scanty force. Had Havelock, after the fashion of some rash and inexperienced commanders, attempted to carry the enemy's position in front, he would probably have lost half his men; but the dexterous flank movement, which so disconcerted the plans of the Nana Sahib, saved our own people from the wholesale carnage which would otherwise have descended upon them. There was not a life wasted. The indomitable pluck of the British Infantry was husbanded to the best purpose, and every man felt that confidence in his leader which makes each soldier worth a file. 1857. July 17.

But Havelock had only made a beginning, and he did well in reminding his followers that their work was only begun. Cawnpore was but the first stage of the career of victory which lay before them. "Your comrades at Lucknow," said the General in his order of thanks, "are in peril. Agra is besieged; Delhi is still the focus of mutiny and rebellion. You must make great sacrifices if you would obtain great results. Three cities have to be saved, two strong places to be disblockaded. Your General is confident that he can accomplish all these things, and restore this part of India to tranquillity, if you only second him with your efforts, and if your discipline is equal to your valour."

It might be thought that these "ifs" were not needed; that the English soldiers who had followed Havelock from Allahabad to Cawnpore, and had

1857. June 17—18. already so nobly seconded his efforts, had placed themselves beyond the reach of all such doubts and suspicions. But the General was a practised writer of despatches and general orders; for years he had been doing for others what he was now doing for himself. Few men knew better the use of words or was less likely to make a slip in any public manifesto. There was, in truth, no ingratitude and no inadvertence in this language of misgiving. There was only too much justice, and too deep a meaning in it. For, scarcely had the Force reached Cawnpore, when it was seen that the demoralisation of drunkenness was upon it. "Whilst I was winning a victory," said Havelock, "on the sixteenth, some of my men were plundering the Commissariat on the line of march." And once within reach of the streets and bazaars of Cawnpore, strong drink of all kinds, the plunder chiefly of our European shops and houses, was to be had in abundance by all who were pleased to take it. And that they did take it was not surprising. Even "Havelock's saints," if there had been a re-birth of them, would have been sorely tempted and tried by this upward march, by the heat, the hunger, the thirst, the fatigue; by the excitement of constant battle, by the thought of the intolerable wrong that had been inflicted on our people, and by the burden of the retribution which they carried with them. They had seen death in many shapes; and now they had brought in for burial the bodies of their comrades slain in the battle or stricken down by the pestilence. These evil influences—still more evil in their alternations, now of excitement, now of depression—drove the British soldiers to the brief solace of strong drink; and such a state of things arose, that Havelock now did what Neill had before done at Allahabad—he "ordered all the beer, wine, spirits, and every drinkable thing at Cawnpore, to be purchased by the Commissariat." "If it had remained," he said, reporting what he had done to the Commander-in-Chief, "it would have required half my force to keep it from being drunk up by the other half, and I should not have had a soldier in camp." 1857. July.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVELOCK AT CAWNPORE—STATE OF THE SOLDIERY—DISCOURAGING CIRCUMSTANCES—FLIGHT OF THE NANA—DESTRUCTION OF THE BITHOOR PALACE—ARRIVAL OF NEILL—HIS PUNISHMENT OF CRIMINALS—FIRST MOVEMENT TOWARDS LUCKNOW—GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE REBELLION.

1857. July. State of the Soldiery

THE English soldier is never a model of forbearance. When the blood is up and the drink is down he is very terrible to all who come across his path. Even in fair fight with a Christian enemy, there are times and seasons when the instincts of a brutal nature are stronger than the conscience and the reason of the man. The honourable resistance of brave men, fighting for their hearths and altars, has often roused the passions of our soldiery to such a height that they have spared neither sex nor age, yielded to no pity, and abstained from no crime. But never, since England had a standing army, have such provocations assailed our fighting-men as those which hardened the hearts of Havelock's battalions on their march to Cawnpore. The rage within them was not wholly an unrighteous rage, for at the bottom of it was an infinite compassion for the women and children who had been so foully wronged, and a just hatred and horror of the crime of the wrong-doers; and they did well to be angry. The Tragedy of Cawnpore

1857. July 16—18.

excited an intense national hatred in the breasts of Englishmen in distant countries and after a long lapse of time; but here our soldiers were on the very scene of the butchery, the butchers were still red-handed, and the evidences of the slaughter were still fresh—visible to the eye, clear to the understanding, with a horrible suggestiveness even to the most obtuse. Our people went to the Entrenchments, and there they wondered and admired. They went to the Beebeeghur, and there they shuddered and wept. To think of so much consummate bravery and of the end of it, was enough to madden even sober-minded men, and to stimulate them to acts of fearful retribution.

If, then, the first days of the re-occupation of Cawnpore had been stained by excesses on the part of our soldiery—far greater than any which are recorded against them—it would be the duty of the historian to speak lightly of their offences. Neither in the Cantonment nor in the Town was there any enemy, in the military sense of the word; for the once boastful army of the Nana was broken and dispersed, and none clearly knew whither it had gone. But those were days in which whole races were looked upon as enemies, and whole cities were declared to be guilty and blood-stained. And if Havelock's fighting-men, whilst the blood was still wet in the slaughter-house, had looked upon every Native found in the neighbourhood of that accursed spot as an adherent of the Nana, and struck at all with indiscriminate retribution, such sweeping punishment might now be looked back upon with less feeling of shame than upon much that was done, before and after, under less terrible provocation. As the record runs, it does not seem that the burden laid

1857. July 16—18. upon Cawnpore was heavy in relation to its guilt.* Heaven knows what was in their hearts, or what might have been done, but for the strong restraining hand laid upon them by their Commander. That the citizens themselves expected chastisement is certain. For whilst a few, on our arrival at Cawnpore, came to our camp with propitiatory offerings of milk and vegetables, fruits and flowers, large numbers flocked panic-struck out of the town to hide themselves in the adjacent villages, or to seek safety on the Oude side of the river. Some were propelled by the knowledge of their guilt; some, scared by the tidings that had come from below, fled under the instinct of self-preservation. Meanwhile, our people were plundering in all directions, the Sikhs, as ever, showing an activity of zeal in this their favourite pursuit. It is probable that much of the property then seized underwent only a process of restoration, and came back to the nation at last to which it properly belonged. But this did not hallow it in Havelock's eyes. He set his face stedfastly against it, and issued an order in which he said, "The marauding in this camp exceeds the disorders which supervened on the short-lived triumph of the miscreant Nana Sahib. A Provost-Marshal has been appointed, with special instructions to hang up, in their uniform, all British soldiers that plunder. This shall not be an idle threat. Commanding officers have received the most distinct warnings on the subject."

Doubts and anxieties. This was not cheerful work, but there was other

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* Most exaggerated stories of this retributory carnage at Cawnpore were at one time in circulation. It was stated both in Anglo-Indian and in Continental journals that ten thousand of the inhabitants had been killed. This was a tremendous assertion, representing rather what might have been than what was. Some wished that it had been so, for vengeance' sake; others, that there might be a pretext for maligning the English.

1857. July 16—18. Renaud and Beatson.

perhaps still more depressing. The sick and wounded were to be visited. Cholera and dysentery were in his Camp. Two of the finest soldiers in the army lay dying—one stricken in the battle, the other by the pestilence. Human aid could do nothing for them. Then there was great doubt as to the position of the enemy. Strong as it was in courage, Havelock's column was very weak in numbers, and tidings came that the Army of the Nana Sahib was at Bithoor, mustering five thousand muskets and sabres, and forty-five guns. It was probable that the place had been strengthened by every possible means which the wealth of material in his hands could supply, and it was certain that our light artillery could make no impression on a stronghold so fortified and defended. It was not strange, therefore, that, in the lull which succeeded the re-occupation of Cawnpore, all these discouragements caused a feeling of depression almost amounting to despondency to sink for a little space into Havelock's mind.* But it presently passed away. For the good Providence which had battled so often for us was still on our side, and the dangers which he had dreaded were delusions.

Flight of the Nana.

In truth, he had already accomplished more than he had ventured to hope. He had beaten the enemy more thoroughly on the 16th than he knew at the time, and there was no present fear of the Nana bringing his broken battalions into the field against us. After the battle, the baffled Mahratta had taken

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* "As he sat at dinner with his son on the evening of the 17th, his mind appeared, for the first and last time, to be affected with gloomy forebodings, as it dwelt upon the possible annihilation of his brave men in a fruitless attempt to accomplish what was beyond their strength. After remaining long in deep thought, his strong sense of duty, and his confidence in the justice of his cause, restored the buoyancy of his spirits, and he exclaimed, 'If the worst comes to the worst, we can but die with our swords in our hands.'"—*Marshman's Life of Havelock.*

1857. July 16—18.

flight to Bithoor, attended by a few Sowars; and as he rode through Cawnpore, his horse flecked with foam, he might have met the public criers proclaiming that the Feringhees had been well nigh exterminated, and offering rewards for the heads of the few who were still left upon the face of the earth. But the lie had exploded, and his one thought at that moment was escape from the pursuing Englishman. Arrived at Bithoor, he saw clearly that the game was up. His followers were fast deserting him. Many, it is said, reproached him for his failure. All, we may be sure, clamoured for pay. His terror-stricken imagination pictured a vast avenging Army on his track; and the great instinct of self-preservation prompted him to gather up the women of his family, to embark by night on a boat to ascend the Ganges to Futtehgurh, and to give out that he was preparing himself for self-immolation. He was to consign himself to the sacred waters of the Ganges, which had been the grave of so many of his victims. There was to be a given signal, through the darkness of the early night, which was to mark the moment of the ex-Peishwah's suicidal immersion. But he had no thought of dying. The signal light was extinguished, and a cry arose from the religious mendicants who were assembled on the Cawnpore bank of the river, and who believed that the Nana was dead.* But, covered by the darkness, he emerged upon the Oude side of the Ganges, and his escape was safely accomplished.†

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* Mr. Sherer, from whose report these particulars are taken, says: "The Gungapootras were waiting on the shore. About mid-stream the light was extinguished, and, with a yell that must have reached the boat, the mendicant Brahmins rushed up to the Palace and commenced plundering all that they could lay their hands on. The crafty Nana was disembarking in the darkness on the other side."

† His last act before leaving Bithoor was the murder of the only

1857. July 16—18. Meanwhile, Havelock, thinking that a strong force of the enemy would probably soon march down upon his position, had moved the bulk of his little army to the north-western point of the cantonment, near Newab-gunj, to defend the line of the Great Trunk Road. Strategically, the movement was the result of an error; but, in another sense, it was grounded upon a too substantial fact, and had a wisdom of its own, apart from the manœuvres of the enemy. It took the troops far away from the temptations of the liquor-shops, and contributed greatly to the maintenance of that discipline which he had sorrowfully seen fading away. July 18. And whilst the military chief was thus taking measures for the protection of both races, the civil magistrate was proclaiming through the City the re-assertion of the British power and the re-establishment of the British law. At the Cotwalee, the people flocked around Sherer and his escort, and professed their delight at our reappearance amongst them. And there was probably much sincerity in these professions, on the part at least of the trading classes, who commonly lost more than they gained by these convulsions. Not only were the English and their followers good customers in quiet times, but the peaceful citizens had an interest in the maintenance of order and the upholding of the law, for with the predatory classes, who thrive in times of tumult and terror, there was little respect for colour or creed. The wolfish propensities of humanity were, in all such conjunctures, strongly developed, and as

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captive in his hands. This was a woman, named Carter, who had been taken prisoner, and who had survived the pangs and perils of childbirth in the Nana's Palace. The widows of the deceased ex-Peishwah had treated her with kindness: but when the Nana fled from Bithoor he order the woman and her infant to be put to death, and the guard faithfully obeyed him.

1857. at Allahabad so at Cawnpore, innocent industry cowered beneath the rampant rapacity of crime.

July 19. Destruction of the Bithoor Palace. On the following day, it was determined that the actual position of affairs at Bithoor should be ascertained beyond all doubt. So a detachment was sent out under Major Stephenson, of the Madras Fusiliers, to beat up the quarters of the some-time Pretender to the Peishwahship, and to set our mark upon the place. The information which Havelock had received from his spies caused him rightly to think that it would not need the services of a strong force to do all that was required. The old home of the Nana had been abandoned. There was no enemy to be seen. So the Palace lay at the mercy of our soldiery —and it was soon despoiled and destroyed. There was much of the plunder of our dwelling-houses in its apartments—traces of our English civilisation everywhere in kid-gloves and champagne, and books for hot-weather reading. But the Government treasure, to which the Nana had helped himself in such profusion, was not to be found, and the family jewels had either been carried off or hidden away, past all chance of immediate discovery. It was reserved for a later domiciliary visit to disclose some of the hiding places of the abandoned property.* But a considerable wealth of artillery was carried off by Major Stephenson on his return march to Cawnpore.

So, for the time at least, there was a clearance on that side of the river. The local influence of the Nana was gone. The last home of the Peishwahs was a ruin. The only important member of his household who remained was the Nana Narain Rao, son of the Soubahdar Rumchunder Punt. This man had been well known to the English at Cawnpore, and had been by many of our people, with only a hazy knowledge of native individuality, mistaken for the other and greater Nana, the adopted son of the Peishwah, of whom he was in truth only a retainer.* Whether this man were one of those double-dyed traitors who hang on to the skirts of success and are driven backwards and forwards by every gust of fortune, or whether his sympathies had all along been with the English, it is hard to say; but it is stated that he had been imprisoned by the Nana, and it is certain that, after his master's flight, he made tenders of allegiance and offered his services to the British General.† He had been the first to send word 1857. July 19.

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* A Native witness, who kept a diary of the incidents of this eventful summer—"a humble but loyal subject of the State, Nanuck-chund by name"—says that the treasure (coin) had been looted by the people before the English arrived. Mr. Sherer says that, in his opinion, the destruction of the Palace was a mistake, as it rendered more remote the prospect of discovering concealed treasure.

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* See note on this subject, vol. i. page 575. I suspect that many who have talked of their acquaintance with the Nana, knew only Nana Narain Rao.

† The "humble but loyal subject of the State," whose evidence is cited in a previous note, was very anxious to convict Narain Rao of double treachery. He states, that "Nana Narain Rao conducted Nana Doondoo Punt to the other bank of the Ganges and returned to Bithoor. Those men went to him and reminded him that his father, Rumchunder Punt, had been a faithful servant and Soubahdar of the Nana, and he (Narain Rao) was bound to protect the property at Bithoor. But Narain Rao paid no attention. On the contrary, he gave out that the Nana's boat had capsized, and then presented himself at Bithoor. He declares that the Nana forcibly took him away; but he ran away, and came here. People say it is a great falsehood, and if this Nana (the Soubahdar's son) wished it, and was really attached to the British cause, he could easily get Nana Doondoo Punt captured."—In another entry in his journal, he says: "*July* 19. I was told to-day that, owing to the treachery of Nana Doondoo Punt, the Bara, &c., of Bithoor have been set on fire, and that the traitor Nana Narain Rao wishes to pass himself off as a well-wisher of the Government."—"*July* 20. It is just as I anticipated. Nana Narain Rao, son of the Soubahdar, wishes to pass himself off as a well-wisher of the Government; but there is a great crowd at this moment, and the Suhib-logue have no time to spare. It is also very difficult to find witnesses against him by summary inquiries, and I see no chance of filing a complaint against him before any officer." This man's evidence is not very trustworthy. He says that, on the 17th of July, he saw General Havelock and General Neill near the Cotwallee, at Cawnpore. But Neill did not arrive till three days afterwards.

1857. July 19. to Havelock that Bithoor had been evacuated by the Nana and his followers, and it was at least probable that some useful information might, at a later period, be derived from him. So he was kindly received, but not without some cautionary words.

Neill's departure from Allahabad. In the meanwhile Colonel Neill was making his way up to Cawnpore. After the departure of Havelock, he had been actively employed in maturing his arrangements for the defence of Allahabad, and in endeavouring to collect troops from below. In this last respect he had made no great progress; for the unsettled state of affairs at Benares* made Colonel Gordon, who thought that the latter place was of the two in the greater danger, reluctant to diminish his military strength. But he had pushed forward his defensive measures with an elaborate completeness, which left nothing unconsidered, scarcely anything undone. And when he found that his duty summoned him to Cawnpore, to take a more active part in the coming campaign, he drew up an elaborate paper of instructions for the guidance of his successors, which he committed to the care of Captain Drummond Hay.† On the important subject of "Supplies" he wrote at some length. On the number and disposition of the troops he next commented. "By order of Government," he said, "this garrison

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* "I look upon Benares as much more exposed than Allahabad, inasmuch as you have a regular fort, whereas our position as a military one is bad as bad can be without fortifications. A few hundred Europeans separated from the river by a city containing half a million of inhabitants, and the country people already becoming more and more hostile every day, while we are at any time exposed to an invasion from Oude, *viâ* the unoccupied post of Jaunpore." — *Gordon to Neill. July* 11.

† Of H.M.'s Seventy-eighth, Colonel O'Brien had been appointed Neill's successor at Allahabad, but he did not arrive in time to receive charge directly from Neill.

1857. July 7—15

is to be maintained at the strength of six hundred and forty-five Europeans. Of these I would not have more than three hundred and forty-five inside the Fort, seventy in the Musjid, a Company at the Railway Station near the Kooshen Gardens, a Company at Mr. Hodgson's house, and some in the Church in Cantonments. . . . The church would be occupied by soldiers as a barrack." Those were days when we could not afford to be nice in matters of this kind, and such desecrations were of ordinary occurrence. He wrote also of the state of the defences, pointing out all the weak points; of the Police; of the Arsenal and the Ordnance Stores; of the Intelligence Department; and under the head of "Hanging" he wrote, "I have always tried by general court-martial any prisoners connected with the garrison, the Provost hanging those so sentenced." Then, after precise instructions relating to the families of officers and soldiers, to the training of picked Infantry soldiers in the gun-drill, to repair the distressing deficiency of Artillerymen, and to the sanitary condition of barracks and other quarters for the soldiery, he proceeded to speak of the operations to be undertaken in the event of fresh manifestations of revolt. This section he headed "Defensive Operations;" but he characteristically added, "I prefer the offensive system." "If I had the power," he wrote, "I should never permit an enemy to enter the City. With a small force, in addition to a garrison sufficient to hold the Fort, the City, Cantonment and all between the two rivers, could be disputed for long against superior numbers. I would hold Kydgunge to the last, and if closely invested would cut down the trees within fire and gunshot of the Fort, knock down some garden walls near the Fort, and if the

1857. July 7—15. enemy attempted to assault from the Papamow or Benares side, they could easily be prevented crossing the river. I prefer the offensive system, and always follow it when possible; make frequent sharp attacks, well planned and supported, using as much artillery, nine-pounders if possible, as I could muster. The general object is now to put down the parties moving about and plundering villages; Native troops (the Sikhs) answered well, and did good service. When Europeans are en route, they may be employed, but I would never send them out on purpose, except in cases of emergency. Powder-bags, to blow in doors, &c., are useful things to have in this village. Also rockets, when to be had, and persons who know the use of them."

July 15. All this done for the continued security of the important position which his energy had saved, Neill was eager to go to the front. The opportunity was before him. On the 15th of July he had received a telegraphic message from the Commander-in-Chief, containing laudatory recognition of Havelock's victory before Futtehpore, and of the general conduct of the operations intrusted to him. With this had come also an important addition: "But his (Havelock's) health is not strong, and the season is very trying; it is urgently necessary, therefore, that provision should be made for placing the command of the column in tried hands of known and assured efficiency, in whom perfect confidence can be placed, in case Havelock should become from any cause unfit for duty. You have been selected for the post, and accordingly you will proceed with every practicable expedition to join Havelock, making over the command of Allahabad to the next senior officer." The rank of Brigadier-General had been conferred on

Neill, and, thus stimulated by the feeling that he had the full confidence of Government, he started on the same evening for Cawnpore; and on the morning of the 20th he arrived there and reported himself to the Commander of the Force. "I had hardly seen General Havelock," he wrote afterwards in a letter to a friend, "before he said to me: 'Now, General Neill, let us understand each other; you have no power or authority here whilst I am here, and you are not to issue a single order.' "* 1857. July 20.

Neill at Cawnpore. But it was arranged that whilst Havelock, being in chief command, should mature his arrangements for the crossing of the Ganges, Neill should remain in charge of Cawnpore. One of his first acts, after his arrival, was to inquire into all the circumstances of the recent massacres, and to do what he could to avenge them. There are deeds which it is better to suffer the actor to chronicle in his own words. In a letter before me, Colonel Neill, after describing events already recorded in this narrative, says: "The men were shot, the women and children were brought up to a little bungalow near the Assembly-rooms. The Futtehgurh fugitives, such as were saved, were brought in there too. I have sent a list of all, and their fate. Upwards of two hundred women and

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* It should be stated, however, that as Neill entered in his journal at the time that he had been well received by Havelock, it may be assumed that there was no discourtesy in the manner in which this intimation was conveyed. See following passage: "Got into Cawnpore about seven A.M., Monday 20th . . . and am well received by General Havelock. Poor Captain Beatson, Adjutant-General, died of cholera, and Currie, of Eighty-fourth, died of his wound, a round short in the side; saw Renaud, his left leg taken off, high up the thigh, looking very pale and ill. . . . Stephenson, with remainder of Fusiliers, gone out to Bithoor with Cavalry and Sikhs to destroy it. Cavalry with Barrow bring in guns in the forenoon. . . . General Havelock informs me he will leave me at Cawnpore in command during his absence. . . . . Much plundering in the city by Sikhs, Sixty-fourth and Seventy-eighth; most disgraceful."

1857. July. children were brought into that house; many had been killed in the boats, many killed and died in the entrenchments; all who survived fever, dysentery, and cholera, in the confinement in that house, were barbarously murdered, after the receipt of the intelligence of Havelock's first victory—this by the Nana's order. They were badly fed and treated at first, but afterwards got more and clean clothing, and servants to wait on them. They were sent their evening meal on that fatal day, and after it these fiends rushed in and butchered them all; they were shot and hacked to pieces. The bodies of all who died there were thrown into the well of the house, all the murdered also. I saw that house when I first came in. Ladies' and children's bloody torn dresses and shoes were lying about, and locks of hair torn from their heads.* The floor of the one room they were all dragged into and killed was saturated with blood. One cannot control one's feelings. Who could be merciful to one concerned? Severity at the first is mercy in the end. I wish to show the Natives of India that the punishment inflicted by us for such deeds will be the heaviest, the most revolting to their feelings, and what they must ever remember.† I issued the following order, which, however objectionable in the estimation of some of our Brahminised infatuated elderly gentlemen, I think suited to the occasion, or rather to the present crisis: '25th July, 1857. The well in which are the remains of the poor women and children so brutally murdered by this miscreant, the Nana, will be filled up, and neatly and decently covered over to form their grave: a party of European soldiers will do so this evening, under the superintendence of an officer. The house in which they were butchered, and which is stained with their blood, will not be washed or cleaned by their countrymen; but Brigadier-General Neill has determined that every stain of that innocent blood shall be cleared up and wiped out, previous to their execution, by such of the miscreants as may be hereafter apprehended, who took an active part in the mutiny, to be selected according to their rank, caste, and degree of guilt. Each miscreant, after sentence of death is pronounced upon him, will be taken down to the house in question, under a guard, and will be forced into cleaning up a small portion of the blood-stains; the task will be made as revolting to his feelings as possible, and the Provost-Marshal will use the lash in forcing any one objecting to complete his task. After properly cleaning up his portion, the culprit is to be immediately hanged, and for this purpose a gallows will be erected close at hand.'—The first culprit was a Soubahdar of the Sixth Native Infantry, a fat brute, a very high Brahmin. The sweeper's brush was put into his hands by a sweeper, and he was ordered to set to work. He had about half a square foot to clean; he made some objection, when down came the lash, and he yelled again; he wiped it all up clean, and was then hung, and his remains buried in the public road. Some days after, others were brought

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* Other narrators have described the scene in similar language. Major North says: "Tortured by the fierce thirst of revenge, and penetrated by the sense of their sufferings, strange wild feelings awoke within us. Vaunting, eager, maddened, we sped onward to the dreary house of martyrdom, where their blood was outpoured like water; the clotted gore lay ankle deep on the polluted floor, and also long tresses of silken hair, fragments of female wearing apparel, hats, books, children's toys, were scattered about in terrible confusion." The alleged inscriptions on the walls were malicious or silly forgeries.

† In another letter, Neill says: "My object is to inflict a fearful punishment for a revolting, cowardly, barbarous deed, and to strike terror into these rebels. . . . No one who has witnessed the scenes of murder, mutilation and massacre, can ever listen to the word 'mercy' as applied to these fiends."

1857.
July.

1857. July.

in—one a Mahomedan officer of our civil court, a great rascal, and one of the leading men: he rather objected, was flogged, made to lick part of the blood with his tongue. No doubt this is strange law, but it suits the occasion well, and I hope I shall not be interfered with until the room is thoroughly cleansed in this way. . . . I will hold my own, with the blessing and help of God. I cannot help seeing that His finger is in all this—we have been false to ourselves so often."

This story has been told before,* and with comments of various shades of opinion. It is very safe and easy in quiet times, and in a Christian land, to condemn such acts as these with placid judicial severity, for the sentence of condemnation demands no thought, and is sure to evoke much sympathy. But we must re-live that month of July, and transport ourselves to the threshold of the Beebeeghur, rightly to estimate them. If ever, in the history of human strife, it were righteous to invest retribution with unknown terrors, it was whilst the blood of our innocents was still red in the slaughter-house. It was not that men, in ordinary conjunctures strong-headed and tender-hearted, lost the power of discerning between right and wrong in the face of the horrors that beset them, but that many of the wisest and best amongst our people, sternly composed in the midst of all excitements and bewilderments, deliberately harboured the conviction, that it was their duty to put mercy far away from them, and to visit exceptional wickedness with an exceptional severity of punishment. There was a remorseless logic in the arguments on which they built up this faith. It was contended that as there were different degrees of murder, there should also be different degrees of death-punishment. Colonel John Nicholson, of whose heroic character and illustrious career it will hereafter be my privilege to write in detail, was eager to have a special Act passed, legalising in certain cases more cruel forms of execution—that is to say, death with torture. "Let us," he wrote to Colonel Edwardes, at the end of May, "propose a Bill for the flaying alive, impalement, or burning of the murderers of the women and children at Delhi. The idea of simply hanging the perpetrators of such atrocities is maddening. I wish that I were in that part of the world, that if necessary I might take the law into my own hands." Again, a few days later, vehemently urging this exceptional legislation: "You do not answer me about the Bill for a new kind of death for the murderers and dishonourers of our women.* I will propose it alone, if you will not help me. I will not, if I can help it, see fiends of that stamp let off with simple hanging." Edwardes, it seems, was naturally reluctant to argue the question with his energetic friend; but Nicholson could not rid himself of the thought that such acts of cruel retribution were justified in every sense, and he appealed to Holy Writ in support of the logical arguments which he adduced. Writing at a later period, he said, "As regards torturing the murderers of the women and children: If it be right otherwise, I do not think we should refrain from it, because it is a Native custom. We are told in the Bible that stripes shall be meted out according to faults, and if hanging is sufficient punishment for such wretches, it is too severe for ordinary mutineers. If I had

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* It was first published, soon after the event, in an Ayrshire journal.

1857. July.

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* This was the mistake of the day. There had been no dishonouring of our women, in the sense intended.

1857. July. them in my power to-day, and knew that I were to die to-morrow, I would inflict the most excruciating tortures I could think of on them with a perfectly easy conscience. Our English nature appears to me to be always in extremes. A few years ago men (frequently innocent) used to be tortured merely on suspicion. Now there is no punishment worse than hanging, which is a very easy death, for atrocities which could not be exceeded by fiends. We have different scales of punishment for different kinds of theft, assault, forgery, and other crimes—why not for murder?"

Kindred sentiments might be quoted from other sources. Even the wisest and best in those days, though some might have shrunk from the open advocacy of torture, were prone to think that instantaneous death to men, who perhaps gloried in it as an anticipatory dismissal to eternal beatitude, was but an inadequate requital for the enormous crimes that were committed against us. Christian piety, indeed, was not slow to rebuke those who, in that conjuncture, had any bowels of compassion, making them reluctant to smite heavily at the persecutors of our race. It was from one of the purest hearts and one of the soundest heads in all our Christian community that the following remonstrance issued. It was addressed to Henry Tucker, Commissioner of Benares: "I fear in your case your natural tenderness. But, consider that we have to crucify these affections as well as our lusts. The magistrate bears not the sword in vain. The Word of God gives no authority to the modern tenderness for human life which would save even the murderer. I believe that your duty now is to be firm and resolute, to execute the law rigorously in its extreme penalties, and to set your face as a flint

1857. July.

against all concessions. It is necessary in all Eastern lands to establish a fear and awe of the Government. Then, and not till then, are its benefits appreciated. Previously, they are ascribed to weakness. We must be sternly, rigorously just against all treason, violence, and treachery, and hand down a tradition of our severity. Otherwise these troubles will recur." And even now, after the lapse of many years, there are few righteous men who will not readily accept this doctrine. What is dreadful in the record of retribution is, that some of our people regarded it not as a solemn duty or a terrible necessity, but as a devilish pastime, striking indiscriminately at the black races, and slaying without proof of individual guilt. That Neill was fully assured in his own mind that the men, on whom he had inflicted the terrible punishment, thus described in his own words, were among the actual perpetrators of the great crime which he was called upon to punish, cannot be questioned; and we must all devoutly hope that he was right.

Preparations for advance.

But the chastisement of the enemy was but a small part of the work which then lay before the English Generals. Their mission, indeed, was to save, not to destroy. Havelock had reminded his followers that the campaign was only begun—that Lucknow was in peril, Agra besieged, and Delhi still a focus of rebellion. And he had written to Neill, saying, "The instant you join me, I will, by the blessing of God, strike a blow that shall resound through India." He uttered these words in the flush of victory, when the excitement of battle had, perhaps, unhinged the habitual caution of the sagacious commander. And now that there was a lull in the operations of the

1857. war, the difficulties which lay before him presented themselves in their true proportions. But, although less sanguine and confident than before, he was not less determined to cross the river and to push on into Oude with the utmost possible despatch.

ie defence
Cawnpore.
ily 19—23.

It was necessary, however, before all things, at that time to secure the position of the detachment that was to be left under the command of General Neill. Havelock could ill spare a single man from the little force with which he was to advance on Lucknow, and it was with reluctance that he consented to leave so large a number as three hundred men for the defence of Cawnpore. But with the terrible experience of the past before him, he felt that he could not do less. Uncertain as to the position of his late antagonists—apprehending the probability that, on his crossing the Ganges with the bulk of his force, a large body of the Nana's troops would double back on Cawnpore—Havelock had resolved from the first to select the most advantageous site for an entrenched camp, and before the arrival of Neill the entrenchments had been commenced. "At a little distance from the common ferry," says Havelock's biographer,* "there was an elevated plateau, about two hundred yards in length and a hundred in breadth, situated on the bank of the river. At the distance of about five hundred yards from it there was an island on the river, partly submerged in this season of the year. Between it and the Oude Bank were two smaller islands of alluvial land, thrown up by the action of the river, but covered with water two or three feet deep, and visible only from the reeds which spring up upon them. The General was of opinion that these islands might be turned to good account, if he was

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* Marshman's Life of Havelock.

1857. July 19—23.

obliged to recross the river, while the entrenchment on the right bank would effectually cover that operation. On this mound, accordingly, a field-work capable of accommodating and also of being defended by three hundred men was commenced on the 19th, and pushed on with extraordinary vigour."* The work was done by Native day-labourers, chiefly from the city. The offer of good wages, paid regularly every evening, brought us the ready services of hundreds—nay, thousands of men, careless of what government or what race were in the ascendant, so long as they could eat, and smoke, and sleep, with certainty and without molestation. Disarmed and dismounted troopers of the Irregular Horse were also set to work at the trenches; and any skilled Europeans, willing to help, were retained, and their assistance paid for by the State.

So Neill found the works already in progress when he arrived, and they grew beneath the hands of the great swarm of labourers with surprising rapidity. His quick soldierly eye saw at once that there were some defects in the position; but he admitted that none better could have been selected. Whilst the workmen plied their shovels, our baggage was sent into the entrenchments, and the two Generals went about collecting the guns which were to defend the works in course of construction.† Then the sick were

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* Mr. Sherer, in his official report, says: "General Neill was left with a garrison of less than two hundred men to hold Cawnpore." There can be no doubt, however, that the number stated by Mr. Marshman is the more correct. General Neill himself, writing on the 22nd, says: "I shall have nearly three hundred men of all kinds."

† See the following extracts from General Neill's Journal, which illustrate the narrative of these proceedings: "*Wednesday*, 22*nd*.—Heavy rain this morning—ride out to see entrenchment—don't like the ground about it, but suspect there is no better position. Have a long talk with the General about it. . . . Go with General to see the Arsenal; it is entirely destroyed; in a bad position. There are some brass dis-

1857. July 19—23. Arrangements for crossing the River.

sent in, and every preparation made for sheltering and providing for the effective garrison. And whilst this was being done, arrangements were being made for the conveyance of the bulk of Havelock's force across the waters of the Ganges. The old bridge of boats had been, for all practical purposes, destroyed; and now the steamer, which had brought Spurgin and his party up from Allahabad, was employed in collecting boats; but it was a work of no small difficulty to obtain them. Boatmen, too, were wanting, for men of this class, conscious that they had aided and abetted the foul murder of our people, had prudently dispersed on our reappearance on the scene. But, after a while, some were induced to return to their craft, on a promise of indemnity for past offences. A number of them were enrolled into a corps, and organised on a fixed scale of payment.*

mounted guns there, also three large iron ones in carriages. These, with all the guns here, are being taken down to the entrenched position. . . . . . There is great plundering going on by the troops—most disgraceful—and on the part of Commandants, more particularly the Sixty-fourth; a disinclination to prevent their men misconducting themselves. I should have adopted very decided steps with all these regiments, and this force at first, but this has been neglected. All have taken to plundering, and the example set by officers has been very bad indeed; the plundering of the merchants and shopkeepers in the city by bands of soldiers and Sikhs has been most outrageous, and there has been no check to it. Orders here seem to be unattended to. Pistols and guns fired off in camp. Colonel Tytler informs me the want of attention to orders by Commandants of Corps and others is disgraceful, and I see it plainly. I suppose no force ever marched with a set of so inferior commanding officers. I fear General Havelock will not get off in time he expected; the difficulties in crossing the Ganges are very great. *Thursday, 23rd.* — Agreeably to orders of yesterday, send all sick down to entrenchment, get baggage down, and start myself with Gordon and Bruce. . . . . Governor-General's proclamation giving rewards for capture of rebels and bringing back property, published and promulgated in the bazaars, and all about—get copies printed off. Heavy rain at night. The entrenched position has no strength — except with three times the men—but I will hold it."

* "See Tytler—arrange about a corps of boatmen. He sends me part of a note he has sent to General Havelock about my going with him. . . . . So I may be off soon—set my house in order, as it were. Arrange about what I shall take and what leave behind, &c. &c."—*General Neill's Journal, July* 25. *MS.*

State of affairs in Oude.

There were many, at that time, who, as they had believed that it was easy "to make short work of Delhi," believed also that the relief of Lucknow would be attended with no kind of difficulty. Even in Havelock's camp it seemed to some to be an easy task to make good the march to the Oude capital. The distance was not great, but it was not a question of distance. The whole of Oude was up in arms against us. It was no more than any sane man, acquainted with the circumstances that had attended and the events which had followed the annexation of the kingdom of Oude, must have involuntarily predicated. The passions of all the influential classes were roused, and their antagonism stimulated to the utmost, against us. The remnant of the old Court of Lucknow, the Soldiery, the Landed Aristocracy, were all arrayed against the power that had trodden them down into the dust. It was not strange, therefore, that before the end of June there had been mutiny and rebellion in nearly every station throughout the province. Moreover, it was the great nursery of the Sepoys of the Bengal Army. Every village held the homes and families of men who were fighting against us; and, therefore, bristled with our enemies. Our regular regiments had ripened rapidly in rebellion. For a little space Sir Henry Lawrence had believed that he might play off the Irregulars against the battalions of the Line.* But they

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* At the end of May, Sir Henry Lawrence had written to Lord Canning, saying: "Hitherto the country has been quiet, and we have played the Irregulars against the Line regiments. But being constituted of the same materials, the taint is fast pervading them, and, in a few weeks, if not days, unless in the interim Delhi be captured, there will be one feeling throughout the army—a feeling that our prestige is gone—and that feeling will be more dangerous than any other. Religion, fear, hatred, one and all, have their influences; but there is still a reverence for the Company's Ikhbal. When it is gone, we shall have few friends, indeed."

1857. July. were composed of the same elements; and in Oude, as in other parts, this faith was soon stripped of all that had sustained it, and stood out as a naked delusion. The great "ikhbal" of the Company was fast waning, and even our friends forsook us, believing us to be weak. There was little hope, indeed, from any source but from the wisdom of our leaders and from the courage of our English fighting-men. Of all these conditions, so hostile to British supremacy in Oude, I shall write more fully in another part of this narrative. It is sufficient in this place to give a brief account of the results, which had developed themselves—results obstructive in the extreme to the advance of Havelock's army.

These results, as apparent at the end of June, were thus described by Mr. Gubbins* in a letter to Lord Canning: "Every corps at every station in the province has mutinied, and the districts now are in a state of anarchy. Talookhdars are forcibly resuming their former villages, and burning and slaying all who oppose them. Old feuds are again breaking out, and fighting, both with guns, musketry, &c., is going on in every quarter, more or less. The head Civil Authority having been forced in each instance to abandon his Sudder Station; his Thannahs and Tehseels have gone also, and there is no restraint on violence and anarchy. Did the mutineers pass through and away, civil officers might again go out, and order might again be restored; but they are *not* gone, and are hanging about the province, looking for an opportunity of attacking Lucknow. This I believe they will never obtain, and they are meanwhile melting daily away. The following is the present aspect of the stations of mutineers in the province: "*Khyrabad Division* (Seetapoor, Mohumdi, and Mullaon).—Entirely abandoned. There was a terrible massacre of the Europeans of Shahjehanpoor and Mohumdie. Of the mutinous troops, the Forty-first Native Infantry and Tenth Oude Irregular Infantry have gone towards Delhi; and eleven hundred men, the remains of the Ninth Oude Irregular Infantry and Police Corps, are at Mehmoodabad, forty miles hence, trying to induce the Tolookhdars to join, and daily melting away.—*Lucknow Division* (Lucknow, Onao, Duriabad): Lucknow, and eight miles round it, is all that remains orderly in Oude. We hold two posts, the Residency and Muchee Bhowan, besides a miserable European force in cantonment. The Muchee Bhowan is imposing for the townspeople; but the Natives know, and our engineers have declared, it to be utterly untenable. Should, therefore, a siege be attempted, it will be blown up. The works at the Residency have been greatly strengthened, including my residence and others, and really a prolonged defence can be made. At Duriabad is the Fifth Oude Irregular Infantry in mutiny, but with numbers diminished. They have been joined by Fisher's Horse (Fifteenth), and the Eighth Oude Irregular Infantry from Sultanpore.—*Baraitch Division:* the Second and Third Oude Irregular Infantry, and Tulloh's Battery, and a hundred Horse, in mutiny, have not yet crossed the Gogra; are waiting.—*Fyzabad Division:* this was the most dangerous quarter; the Twenty-second Native Infantry, the Seventeenth from Azimgurh: the Sixth Oude Irregular Infantry, part of the Fifteenth Oude Cavalry, and Mill's Battery making up the mutineers there. This is dissipating somewhat—the Fifteenth

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* Martin Gubbins, Financial Commissioner of Oude—brother of Frederick Gubbins of Benares.

1857. July.

1857. July. Oude Horse having turned towards (as we believe) Cawnpore. Sultanpore abandoned and burnt; many Europeans killed. Salone: ditto; Europeans saved."

Such was the state of things that had grown up in Oude, whilst the English at Cawnpore had been engaged in that fatal struggle for existence which has been narrated in the preceding chapters. Notwithstanding all these reverses, there had been great confidence in the final issue, and, from one end of the country to the other, men felt that Sir Henry Lawrence was a tower of strength. But the month of June had closed in darkly and sadly upon the Lucknow garrison. On the last day of the month, the English had been disastrously defeated in battle at Chinhut. July had dawned upon the siege of Lucknow. And Havelock's victorious entrance into Cawnpore had been saddened by the news which met him—that one of the first victims of that siege had been Henry Lawrence himself. The General had known him well in old times. They had served together in Afghanistan; and were associated by bonds of mutual esteem and affection.* And none knew better than Havelock the loss which the country had sustained. But little time was left for the indulgence of personal or public sorrow. The first thoughts of the General were to be given to the living, not to the dead. It was plain to him that our beleaguered people in Lucknow were in deadly peril, and that all depended, under Providence, upon the rapidity with which he could make good his march to the Oude capital. He felt, too, that the work before him was not restricted to the relief of Lucknow. He did not,

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* "Their acquaintance had commenced sixteen years before, amidst the embarrassments in Afghanistan, and it had gradually ripened into a sacred friendship, under the influence of that mutual appreciation and esteem by which great minds are attracted to each other."—*Marshman's Life of Havelock.*

1857. July.

at first, appreciate the full extent of the difficulties which beset his course, and, in the enthusiasm born of success, he thought that, having relieved Lucknow, he might either march to the reinforcement of the Army before Delhi, which was still holding out with undiminished effrontery, or he might operate effectually in other parts of the country, for the suppression of the mutiny and rebellion which in the North-Western Provinces had now become almost universal.

General condition of the country.

For from many parts of Upper India evil tidings had reached the Cawnpore commanders. Disaster had followed disaster with astounding rapidity. Almost every day brought a new story of mutiny and massacre—a new list of murdered men, women, and children. Some stories were more terrible, some lists were longer than others; but ever there was the same sad, but not inglorious, record of chivalrous action and heroic endurance on the part of the Few, and of cruelty and cowardice on the part of the Many. The gigantic horror of Cawnpore dwarfed all other calamities that had overtaken our people. But there were other crimes committed in that month of June light only when weighed against the burden of guilt borne by the butcher of Bithoor. In Jhansi —one of Lord Dalhousie's annexations by Right of Lapse*—there had been an insurrection headed by the Ranee, with a great destruction of English life. Nearly all Bundlekund was bristling up in arms against us. The troops of Scindiah and Holkar had mutinied and cast in their lot with the Poorbeahs of the Company's army; and many of our people had perished miserably in the territories of those princes, though as yet there were no signs of the hostility of the Durbars. Higher up in Rohilkund not only were the Sepoys in mutiny, murdering their officers, but

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* See Volume I., pages 91—92.

1857. July. the country was in rebellion, and Mahomedan rule was proclaimed under the vice-royalty of Khan Behaudur Khan. Hansi and Hissar had seen their own tragedies; and there had been other episodes of the most painful interest to stir English hearts to their depths. In the Punjab, although it seemed that we were riding out the storm, strained to the utmost but not yielding to its blows, it was becoming plain that the Bengal regiments were breaking into revolt, and streaming down to swell the tide of rebellion at the great centre of Delhi. And ever as week followed week, though false rumours, too readily accepted, of the capture of the great imperial stronghold reached the lower country, only to sow the seeds of future disappointment, the Mogul capital was held by the mutinous troops that had proclaimed the supremacy of Behaudur Shah.

From Agra—then the seat of the Government of the North-Western Provinces—the tidings were not assuring. The great provincial capital, which all through the month of May had been held in security, though not without much doubt and anxiety, had in June been beleaguered by an enemy, which, in the shape of the mutinous regiments from Neemuch and Nusseerabad, had marched down to attack the second city in Hindostan. And whilst Lieutenant-Governor Colvin and all his Chief Officers had been shut up at Agra, the districts under his charge had been rolling away from him. That great triumph of British administration, so vaunted, so believed—the Settlement of the North-Western Provinces—had suddenly collapsed. For a time there was a great revolution of landed property, and almost all that the English had decreed had been down-trodden with a remorseless heel, as though what we had done and

1857. July. boasted had been purposely done in violent scorn of the genius and instincts of the people. Even the Supreme Government, in the first week of July, were constrained to admit that "the North-Western Provinces were for the moment lost."* However humiliating the fact may have been, it was a fact. Our latest administrative triumphs had crumbled away at our feet.

There was some comfort in the thought that the main bodies of the Madras and Bombay armies had not fallen away from their allegiance. But it was hard to say what any hour might bring forth. One Bombay regiment was rising; there were threatening movements in the Southern Mahratta Country, and more than a suspicion that the old adherents of the Rajahs of Sattarah were in league with the representatives of the Peishwahs. The Bombay services in the persons of Brigadier Le-Grand Jacob and Messrs. Rose and Seton-Karr were emulating the good deeds of their brethren in Bengal, and Lord Elphinstone was nobly vindicating the confidence which the British Government had reposed in him, by placing him, for a second time, at the head of an Indian presidency. It was not beyond the pale of probability that Western India would soon be in a blaze. Then, in the Deccan, there was the great Mahomedan State of Hyderabad, where the Nizam, guided and supported by his accomplished minister, Salar Jung, holding fast to the English alliance, still doubted whether they could much longer restrain their troops,

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* "The Bengal Native Army was in mutiny; the North-Western Provinces were for the moment lost; the King of Delhi and our treacherous Sepoys were proclaiming a new empire; small bodies of gallant Englishmen were holding out in isolated stations against fearful odds; the revolt was still extending; and the hearts of all Englishmen in India were daily torn by accounts of the massacre, and worse than massacre, of their women and children."—*Government of India to Court of Directors, July 4*, 1857.

1857. July. if Delhi continued to defy the English Government and to baffle all the efforts of its armies. The great chiefs of Rajpootana had as yet given no sign; but if Western India were to rise, the contagion might spread to them, and, in such circumstances, it would have been difficult to calculate the embarrassments of having a hostile country intersecting our communications between our leading positions on the East and on the West. Nepaul professed fidelity to her alliance, and was willing to lend us an auxiliary body of troops to operate upon Oude; but there were those who believed that on the first symptom of disaster, they would be eager to turn against us; and that, in any case, the enlistment of such allies would be a confession of weakness, which would inflict a severe moral injury on our Government. In whatsoever direction we turned our eyes there was not a gleam of comfort to be seen.

Crossing the river. July 25. By the 25th of July, Havelock's little army had crossed the Ganges. It had been a work beset with difficulties; but the practical energy of Colonel Tytler had surmounted them. The whole were now on the Oude side of the river. The entire force consisted of about fifteen hundred men, with ten guns imperfectly equipped and inefficiently manned. There was, as before, a great dearth of Cavalry. Excellent as it was in all soldierly qualities, this little band of volunteer Horse mustered only sixty sabres. It was in truth a very weak Brigade, such as only the glorious audacity of the English could have conceived for a moment to be capable of accomplishing the work before it. The hopes of the Lucknow garrison had been raised by something like a promise of relief

1857. July 25—28.

in the little space of five or six days. But it was one that now seemed to be beyond the reach of fulfilment. And the wonder is not that the difficulties of the enterprise should have forced themselves upon Havelock's mind, in all their real magnitude, when he found himself across the Ganges, but that he should for a moment have made light of them. The week between the 21st and 28th of July had brought with it an amount of knowledge of the circumstances which surrounded him very fatal to the sanguine views which he had encouraged on his first arrival at Cawnpore. On the 28th he was at Mungalwur—it cannot be said encamped. That he might move as lightly and rapidly as possible, he had advanced without the impediment of tents. "Some," it has been narrated by an officer of the force, "were fortunate enough to get native huts; some managed to get native vaults, in which over-crowding was the rule; while the Sikh soldiers ingeniously rigged up thatched huts for themselves."[†] There was need, for the rain fell, day

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[*] See the following extract from Mr. Martin Gubbins's "Mutinies in Oudh." On the 22nd or 23rd of July, the trusty spy Ungud arrived with tidings of Havelock's arrival at Cawnpore. "We had, it will be remembered," says the Financial Commissioner, "received no single iota of intelligence since the siege began; and now Ungud recounted to us the marvellous tale of a handful of men under Havelock having defeated the Nana in three engagements, and being actually at the moment master of Cawnpore. The news was astounding. We had all along been expecting that the Nana would cross the river and join the besieging force, if he had not actually done so already. I examined Ungud strictly, and came to the conclusion that the joyful and wondrous news was true."—"Many persons had entertained great doubt of the truth of Ungud's information. But their doubts were happily removed by his reappearance at my post on the night of the 25th of July; and this time he brought a letter. It was a reply by Colonel Fraser Tytler to the letter which Ungud had carried from me, and confirmed the intelligence which Ungud had previously given me. Colonel Tytler wrote that the General's force was sufficient to defeat the enemy, that the troops were then crossing the river, and that we might hope to meet in five or six days."

[†] *Calcutta Review*, vol. xxxii., Article, "Havelock's Indian Campaign."

1857. July 28. after day, in torrents, after the manner of an Indian July, and cholera had broken out in the force. There was nothing to cheer or to animate the leader but the one hope of saving the garrison of Lucknow. "I have this morning," wrote Havelock to Sir Patrick Grant, who had suggested that the enterprise was a hazardous one, "received a plan of Lucknow from Major Anderson, engineer in that garrison, and much valuable information in two memoranda, which escaped the enemy's outpost troops, and were partly written in Greek characters.* These communications, and much information orally derived from spies, convince me of the extreme delicacy anddifficulty of any operation to relieve Colonel Inglis, now commanding in Lucknow. It shall be attempted, however, at every risk, and the result faithfully reported."†

The advance into Oude. July 29. So Havelock marched on—Cawnpore with its ghastly memories behind him; before him, at Lucknow, the great horror of a catastrophe still more tragic and overwhelming; around him everywhere a multitude of mutinous soldiers and an armed population, hostile to the core; and with him only the fearlessness of the Englishman to make headway against these terrific odds.

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* These had been brought by Ungud, the spy, of whom mention has been made in a former note.

† Marshman's Life of Havelock.

BOOK VI.—THE PUNJAB AND DELHI.

[MAY—JULY, 1857.]

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CONDITION OF THE PUNJAB—SOURCES OF DANGER—BRITISH RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN—CAUSES OF CONFIDENCE—MONTGOMERY AT LAHORE—EVENTS AT MEEAN-MEER—SERVICES OF BRIGADIER CORBETT—DISARMING OF THE NATIVE REGIMENTS—RELIEF OF THE FORT OF LAHORE—EVENTS AT UMRITSUR AND GOVINDGHUR—THE MUTINIES AT FEROZPORE AND PHILLOUR.

May, 1857.

State of the Punjab.

ALTHOUGH to Lord Canning it had appeared that the most formidable dangers which threatened the security of the Anglo-Indian Empire took shape in the lower countries, because those countries were almost wholly destitute of the defence of European troops, he saw far off, at the furthest extremity of our British dominions, other great perils scarcely less in degree, but of a widely different kind, and counteracted by more favourable conditions. In the lower provinces he feared the malice of the Native soldiery. In the Punjab he dreaded, most of all, the enmity of the people. Sepoy regiments were scattered all over the Sikh country; but the province was, indeed, the great European garrison of British India. The strength of English manhood may have been slight in relation to the actual defensive requirements of our frontier-province abutting upon the Afghan country, from which, even from remote periods, suc-

1857. May. ceeding dynasties had looked for the stream of foreign invasion—small, too, in comparison with the numerical power of the Native regiments, regular and irregular, which were posted in all parts of the Punjab. But even with the mysterious failure of Meerut before his eyes, the Governor-General was full of confidence when he counted up the European regiments on the frontier, and felt that they might overawe the Sepoys. Yet he could not help regarding with some disquieting apprehensions the state of the general population of the province. Little more than seven years had passed since the Empire of Runjit Singh had been brought under the yoke of the English. The State had been overthrown by the soldiery. It was the licence of its military bands that had unintentionally opened to us the gates of the country of the Five Rivers, and the same power, revived or reawakened, might now cast us out, and restore for a while the dynasty of the Singhs. Men of the most sanguine temperament, inflated well-nigh to bursting with national self-love, could hardly believe that the Sirdars of the Punjab, who had lost so much by the conquest of their country, had become wholly reconciled to British rule and eager to perpetuate it. The truth embodied in a few pregnant words by the greatest master of common sense that the world has Bacon. ever seen—"So many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles"—could not be ignored at such a time. Then there was that other great fount of danger—"disbanded soldiery"—which might send forth a sudden torrent to swell the great stream of trouble.* "Walled towns, stored arsenals and armories, goodly races of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery, and the like," wrote the same great master—"all this is but a sheep in lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout and warlike." The breed and disposition of the Sikhs were stout and warlike. We could not regard with contempt the military prowess of the nation which had sent forth the men who, in the great battles of the Sutlej, had taxed to the utmost the skill and valour of Hardinge and Gough, with the best troops of the British Empire at their back, and had driven our Dragoons like sheep before them on the plain of Chillianwallah. 1857. May.

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* The numbers, however, must not be exaggerated. The remains of the Punjabee Army, after the second Sikh war, probably did not exceed 26,000 men. Of these about 10,000 were Sikhs, 7000 Punjabee Mahomedans, 4000 hill Rajpoots, 4000 Hindostances, and 1000 Goorkhas. About 4000 of these old soldiers were enlisted into the Punjab Irregular Force, and an equal number into the Military Police.

Nor was the only danger which threatened the position of the British in our great frontier province, that which glared upon us from the Punjab itself. Beyond the border were turbulent tribes, occupying the Afghan passes, whom it had been our policy now to bribe, now to awe, into submission. An irruption of these predatory hordes into the plain of Peshawur would have caused wide-spread confusion, in the midst of which bodies of Afghan Horse, led, perhaps, by one of the chiefs of the Barukzye family of Caubul, might have streamed down upon our position, and burying, as they had before done, all jealousies and animosities in the grave of a common purpose, might have allied themselves with the Sikhs, and swept the English out of the country. But thinking of this, Lord Canning thought also of the recent subsidiary treaty with Dost Mahomed, of the friendship that had been outwardly established between the two nations, and, above all, of the fact that the strongest feelings of self-interest dictated to the Ameer a course of neutrality at such a time, and that love of English money was stronger than hatred of the English race,

1857. May. Thankfully and hopefully, he remembered the wise advice of Edwardes and the admirable diplomacy of Lawrence;* and he ceased to be troubled by the thought of an Afghan invasion, tremendous as would have been the disaster if it had come upon us at such a time.

There were some other circumstances, too, in our favour. The population of the Punjab was a mixed population. There were national and religious diversities, which forbade the union and concentration which give force even to the feeble. In other parts of our Empire there were diversities of faith, but long contact had rubbed off the angularities which kept them apart, and in the Hindooised Mahomedan, or the Mahomedanised Hindoo, might be seen something almost amounting to fusion. But there was a gulf between the Sikhs and the Mahomedans of the Punjab—between both and the people of Hindostan. The Sikhs learnt with no feeling of joy or sympathy that the King of Delhi had been proclaimed in his old capital, and that Mahomedanism was likely again to be dominant in Upper India. They called to mind exciting national prophecies, which said that the Sikhs would some day stream down to the sack of Delhi; and the old greed of plunder was revived strenuously within them. It might be better for them, at first, to cast in their lot with the Feringhees, whose hour would come sooner or later; it was too soon to strike then. There was some comfort in this thought. There was comfort, too, in the remembrance that the Punjab had been disarmed; that the warlike population of the conquered country no longer went about with swords at their sides, or had firelocks stored in their houses. In all such cases it is probable that the dis-

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* *Ante* vol. i. pp. 432, *et seq.*

1857. May.

armament is but partial; for whilst the searchings of authority are active, many implements of war are buried in the ground, or hidden in stacks or thatches, ready to be exhumed or extracted from their hiding-places, if necessity for their use should arise. Still the danger from that source—of many arms in the hands of men knowing how to use them—though not, perhaps, wholly removed, had been greatly diminished; and in numerous instances the sword had been turned into the ploughshare or the reaping-hook, and soldiers had settled down into the peaceful ways of agricultural life. That they felt the benefits of a strong and a just Government after the years of unrest which had followed the death of Runjit Singh is not to be doubted; and their martial instincts might have been dying out under the subduing influences of a reign of order.

These circumstances were to be counted up in our favour; and there was one more to be added to the account. As the country below the Sutlej had been well-nigh swept of its military strength to garrison the Punjab, so also might it be said that the lower provinces had been drained of the best energies of the political and civil branches of the service to govern and to administer it. Lord Canning, ever hopeful and sanguine; and, manly himself, appreciating the power of individual manhood in others, looked confidently towards the country in which John Lawrence and his Lieutenants stood vigilant and ready for action. Resolute that the Punjab should in all senses be a success, Lord Dalhousie had looked around him for men of good performance and of good promise, and the flower of the two services was planted there when he handed over the Government of India to his successor. There Robert Montgomery and Donald

1857. May.

Macleod, afterwards Chief Rulers of the Province, filled the places next in rank to the Chief Commissionership. There Thornton and Roberts, Barnes and Ricketts, of the one service—Edwardes and Nicholson, Becher and Lake, Taylor and James, of the other, and many other resolute and sagacious men, were teaching the people to respect and love them. There, too, was that famous Punjab Irregular Force raised by the Lawrences, and commanded by Neville Chamberlain, with picked officers under him—men such as Coke, Wilde, Daly, and others of the same stamp—a force of horse and foot, trained alike to activity and to endurance amidst the difficulties of a mountain frontier eight hundred miles in extent, and little likely, it was believed, to sympathise with the Poorbeah regiments of Hindostan. If anywhere throughout our Indian dominions confidence could be placed in the men whose lot it would be to grapple with the dangers rising up before them, it was in the "pet province" of Lord Dalhousie. No man knew better than Lord Canning how all might be lost by individual feebleness, or all might be won by individual strength. All had been lost at Meerut and Delhi; but he had abundant faith in Lawrence and in those who worked under him in the Punjab; and as days passed, and he learnt, somewhat slowly by reason of postal and telegraphic interruptions, the events which were developing themselves in that province, he felt more and more assuredly that his confidence was not misplaced. Of these events I now proceed to speak.

Lawrence at Rawul-Pindee.

The summer heats had driven Sir John Lawrence from Lahore. The ceaseless labour of years had

1857. May.

weakened a robust frame and impaired a naturally strong constitution. A visit to England had been recommended to him; but with that great love of his work, which was shared by all who worked under him in the Punjab, he was reluctant to leave the country so long as he could do his duty with manifest advantage to the State. But he had recognised the necessity of consenting to a compromise, and going out half way to meet the urgency of the case.* There were cool and pleasant places within the range of the great province which he administered—places in which he might do his work, during the extreme heats of the summer weather, without the waste of strength, which could not be arrested at Lahore. So he had been wont, in the month of May, to repair to the refreshing slopes of the Murree Hills; and thither he was this year bound, when the first tidings of the disastrous events at Meerut and Delhi were brought by telegraph to the Punjab. Then he stood fast at Rawul-Pindee, a spot from which he could observe well all that was passing in the Punjab, and looking down, as it were, from an eminence on the varied scene below, could issue mandates to his lieutenants all over the country, and make his presiding genius felt beyond the limits of the province he governed.

May 11, 12. Montgomery at Lahore.

Next in authority to the Chief Commissioner was the Judicial Commissioner. Mr. Robert Montgomery was a Bengal civilian of thirty years' standing in the service. A member of a good Irish Protestant family, he had been taught and disciplined in early youth at that school which had imparted the rudiments of education to the Lawrences. There, on

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* On the 13th of May, Sir John Lawrence, in a letter to Colonel Edwardes, wrote, "I have been very unwell and unable to write. The night before last I put some aconite on my temple. It is a deadly poison. In the night it worked into my eye, and I was nearly blinded."

1857. May.

the banks of the Foyle, these young cotemporaries had become familiar with the stirring watch-words of Derry: "No surrender!" There, if they did not acquire much classic lore, they laid broad and deep the foundations of a manly character. Hardy, robust, and well-disciplined, they went forth into the world by different paths; but time brought the Derry boys again together to sit beside each other on the same Bench, and to learn the same great lessons. When the Lahore Board of Administration was dissolved, Henry and John Lawrence and Robert Montgomery were its members. On the institution of the new administrative system, under the Chief Commissionership of John Lawrence, Mr. Montgomery became Judicial Commissioner.* There were some characteristic differences between him and his chief; but they lay mainly on the surface. An unmistakable benevolence of aspect, and a rare gentleness of manner, might have led some to suppose that he was one made to shine only in quiet times and in happy circumstances. But the genial smile and the kindly voice, which won all hearts, denoted not the absence of that resolute will and that stern courage which spoke out so plainly in the look and bearing of the Chief Commissioner. It only needed a great occasion to show that he could be hard as a rock and cruel as steel to resist the oppressions of the proud, and to smite the persecutors of our race. And those who knew him best said of him that it was a fortunate

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* During the existence of the Lahore Board of Administration, Montgomery, who was a civilian of the Thomasonian school, who had graduated in the North-Western Provinces, concurred in the opinions and supported the views of John more frequently than those of Henry Lawrence; but, at a later period, his measures both in Oudh and the Punjab indicated his mature acceptance of the principles and policy of the latter. In no one have the Native aristocracy found a more generous advocate than in Sir Robert Montgomery.

1857. May.

circumstance that they had then at Lahore, as chief director of affairs, one who was a man of impulse, with whom to think was to act, and whose very defects, including a want of caution and circumspection, were of a kind to be essentially serviceable in such a conjuncture.

State of the troops at Meean-Meer.

The hour of the great crisis found Mr. Montgomery at the civil station of Anarkullee, situated at the distance of a mile from the Punjabee capital. In the city of Lahore itself there was a mixed population, numbering nearly a hundred thousand, the most numerous classes being Sikhs and Mahomedans, many of them born soldiers. The fort, which was within the walls of the city, was garrisoned by a company of an European regiment, some details of European Artillery, and half a regiment of Sepoys. These detachments for garrison duty were relieved at fixed intervals, and returned to the cantonment of Meean-Meer, six miles from Lahore, where the great bulk of our military force was posted. At that station were three regiments of Native Infantry and a regiment of Native Cavalry, watched by the Eighty-first Foot and two troops of European Horse Artillery. Two of the Sepoy regiments were among the most distinguished in the service. The Sixteenth Grenadiers was one of the "beautiful regiments" which had fought under Nott against the Afghans of Candahar, and the Twenty-sixth had done so well under Pollock, that Lord Ellenborough had made it a Light Infantry corps. The other Native regiments were the Forty-ninth Infantry and the Eighth Cavalry. Roughly computed, it may be said that the Native troops outnumbered the Europeans as four to one.

May 11.

On Monday, the 11th of May, it was known at Lahore that the Meerut regiments had revolted. On

1857. May 12. the morning of the 12th came the still more exciting intelligence that Delhi was in the hands of the rebels. The tremendous significance of these tidings was not likely to be underrated by a man of Montgomery's intelligence and experience. But it did not bewilder him for a moment. He saw clearly that the safety of India depended at such a time on the salvation of the Punjab. The Punjab in the hands of the enemy, and all Upper India must be lost. It was certain that the great arsenal of Delhi had gone from us; it was impossible to exaggerate the helplessness of the English if the magazines of the Punjab and the adjacent territories were also to be wrested from them. Any success on the part of the Regular Sepoy regiments might stimulate all the Irregular battalions in the Punjab to revolt, and this might be followed by a rising of the people. But it was not equally clear how this gigantic evil was to be arrested. Understanding well the native character, Montgomery knew that the Sepoy was not less likely to be driven into hostility by his fears than by his resentments. It might, therefore, be the safer course to keep things quiet, and to betray no symptom of suspicion. But, on the other hand, it was impossible to overrate the advantage of striking the first blow. The party that is first to be the party of action has a double chance of success.

But the general knowledge that there was a spirit of mutiny in the Bengal Army might not have induced the authorities at Lahore to take the initiative, and might not have justified them in doing it, if there had been no particular knowledge of local disaffection among the Punjabee troops. This knowledge, however, had been obtained. On a suggestion from Mr. Montgomery, Captain Richard Lawrence,

1857.
May 12.

Chief of the Police and Thuggee Departments in the Punjab, had commissioned the head-writer of the Thuggee office, a Brahmin of Oude, to ascertain the feelings and intentions of the Lahore troops. A fitter agent could not have been employed, for his were both the country and the caste of the most influential of the Poorbeah Sepoys. He did his work loyally and well. Scrupulous as he was, on the score of caste, as any Brahmin in the service, he had no sympathy with the treacherous machinations of men who were eating the salt of the British Government, and were under the kindly care of its officers; and he brought back to Richard Lawrence, after brief but satisfying inquiry, tidings that the regiments at Meean-Meer were ripe for revolt. "Sahib," said the faithful Brahmin, "they are full of *fissad**—they are up to *this* in it;" and he laid his hand upon his throat. It was plain that they were only waiting for information from the countries below to break into open mutiny.

The Council at Anarkullee.

In this conjuncture Montgomery took counsel with his colleagues—the chief civilians and staff-officers at Anarkullee, who assembled in the house of Macpherson, the Military Secretary. They were Mr. Donald Macleod, Mr. Egerton, Colonel Ommaney, Mr. Roberts, Captains Macpherson, Richard Lawrence, and Waterloo Hutchinson. There was an animated discussion. Macpherson had already talked the matter over with Robert Montgomery, and they had agreed that it would be expedient to deprive the Sepoys of their ammunition. It was now suggested by the former that this should be done—that the ammunition should be lodged in store, and that the regiments should be told that, as they had obviously much

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* Sedition.

1857. May 12. anxiety with respect to the greased cartridges, it was the order of the Government that all ground of alarm should be removed for the present by leaving them without any ammunition at all. On this Richard Lawrence said, "I would disarm them altogether;" to which Macpherson replied that it was scarcely probable that the military authorities would consent to such a measure. After some further discussion, Montgomery determined that he and Macpherson should drive over to the military station and propose to the Brigadier, at any rate, to deprive the Native regiments of their ammunition. In ordinary course of affairs, the Chief Commissioner would have been consulted. But there was an interruption of the telegraphic communication between Lahore and Rawul-Pindee; so the responsibility of deciding upon immediate action rested with Montgomery, and he cheerfully undertook it.

Brigadier Corbett. The station of Meean-Meer was then in military charge of Brigadier Stuart Corbett, an officer of the Indian Army, who had served the Company for nearly forty years, but had lost but little of the bodily and none of the mental vigour of his prime; and it was a happy circumstance that he had none of that incapacity to grasp strange incidents and new situations—none of that timid shrinking from responsibility—which is so often evinced by feeble minds, trammelled by the associations of long years of convention and routine. A happy circumstance, indeed, that to such a man Montgomery now communicated the alarming tidings which had been received from Meerut and Delhi. Corbett saw at once that there was a pressing necessity for prompt and vigorous action; and, though, at first, knowing well the feelings of the officers under his command, he could not

1857. May 12.

embrace the bold project of disarming the troops, he did not hesitate to adopt the proposal to render the Native regiments comparatively harmless by the seizure of their ammunition. But, as the day advanced, he began to doubt whether the precautionary measures on which they had resolved in the morning would suffice for such an emergency. So he wrote to Macpherson in brief decided language, more emphatic than official, saying that he would "go the whole hog" and disarm the troops altogether. And Montgomery readily consented to the proposal.*

The Station Ball.

It was a bold measure, and to be accomplished only by secrecy and suddenness. But neither Mont-

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* It has been stated, and upon authority commonly trustworthy—that of Mr. Cave Browne, in his very valuable work "The Punjab and Delhi in 1857"—that it was the consideration of a more pressing local danger that caused the extreme measure of disarming the troops to be agreed upon. It is said that intelligence had been received to the effect that the Sepoy regiments had conspired to seize the fort of Lahore. It was garrisoned, as above related, by some European Infantry and Artillery, and a wing of a Native regiment. During the first half of the month of May, the Twenty-sixth were on garrison duty; but on the 15th of the month they were to be relieved by the Forty-ninth. And it was agreed that the wing marching out and the wing marching in—more than a thousand men in all—should turn upon the Europeans and slay them; and then, at a given signal to be seen from a distance, the Sepoys at Meean-Meer should rise, massacre their officers, seize the guns, fire the Cantonments, and release all the prisoners in the gaol. Nor was the rising to be confined to Meean-Meer. It was believed that at Umritsur, at Ferozpore, at Phillour, and Jullundhur the Sepoy regiments were alike prepared to break into rebellion, and that everywhere their first measure would be the seizure of our magazines. The authority for this story was a Sikh police-officer—said to be a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and of undoubted loyalty to the British Government—who had communicated it to Richard Lawrence. But after a very searching inquiry into the events of that morning at Meean-Meer, I have been compelled to discard the whole story, so far at least as concerns its alleged effect upon the minds of Montgomery and Corbett, and the consequent disarming of the troops. Mr. Browne says that God's mercy in permitting the timely discovery of this plot "alone saved hundreds from the snare laid for them." But there are grave doubts as to the existence of the plot, and it was not even talked of until *after* the measure of disarming the troops had been agreed upon. What Richard Lawrence, Captain of Police, really ascertained, at Montgomery's suggestion, was that which is stated in the text. And it is the belief both of Montgomery and Richard Lawrence, as now before me under their own hands, that no new information of any kind caused Corbett to adopt the bolder course.

1857. May 12—13. gomery nor Corbett doubted for a moment that a single white regiment, with a good complement of European Artillery, resolutely commanded and skilfully handled, could overawe the Native Brigade, and force them to lay down their arms. A general parade was, therefore, ordered for the following morning. There was nothing in it to invite suspicion. Everything went on as usual in Cantonments. A ball was that evening to be given by the officers of the station to Colonel Renny and the officers of the Eighty-first Foot. All suggestions as to its postponement were wisely set aside. Nothing was to be done to excite suspicion. The Sepoys of Meean-Meer, and their brethren of all classes, were to see that the English were feasting and dancing in total unconcern, as ever conscious of their strength and confident in their security. So the rooms of the Artillery Mess-House were lighted up at the appointed time; and hosts and guests assembled as though bent only on the enjoyment of the hour. A few there knew what was coming in the morning, and others had a vague impression of an impending danger—an approaching crisis—that might turn that gaily decorated ball-room into a grim battle-field. Some vague reports passed from one to another about the muster of which they had read in the order-book; and the more suspicious were well pleased to think that they could lay their hands upon their swords in a moment. The greater number neither knew nor suspected, but grumbled, saying that it was an inconsiderate and unkindly thing at best to order a general parade for the morning after a ball. And so they danced on into the small hours of the morning, and saw their wives and daughters home, as though there were nothing to disturb the smooth surface of ordinary events. The

1857. May 12—13.

Native sentries posted here and there in Cantonments saw nothing in the movements of the English to indicate anxiety or mistrust. If the Sepoys had, as was alleged, really planned the destruction of the English at Meean-Meer, they must have rejoiced in the thought that their victims, utterly regardless of their doom, were going blindfold to the shambles.

May 13. The disarming Parade.

But when the hours of morning-darkness were past, and day had dawned upon Meean-Meer, other thoughts than these took possession of the Sepoy mind. The Brigade assembled on the parade-ground. There was nothing peculiar in the appearance of that assembly, except that Montgomery, Roberts, and others of the chief civil officers from Anarkullee, were to be seen mounted on the ground.* Every soldier obeyed the orders that were issued to him. The regiments were drawn up in line of contiguous columns. The Artillery and Eighty-first (not numbering more than two hundred and fifty men) were on the right, the Native Cavalry on the left, and the Infantry regiments in the centre; the white men appearing as a mere dot beside the long line of the blacks. At the head of each regiment was read aloud the Government order disbanding the mutinous Thirty-fourth at Barrackpore. These formal proceedings over, the serious business of the morning commenced. The Native regiments were ordered to change front to the rear, and at the same time the Eighty-first also changed front, so as to face the Sepoys; the Artillery, then in the rear, loading their guns unseen by the Native regiment. When this manœuvre, which seemed whilst in execution to be only a part of the Brigade exercise of the morning,

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* They had ridden over from Anarkullee in the morning. It appears that they were not at the ball.

1857. May 13. had been accomplished, a staff officer, Lieutenant Mocatta, Adjutant of the Twenty-sixth Regiment, who could speak the Native languages fluently and correctly, was ordered forward by the Brigadier to read his address to the Sepoys. He did it well, in a clear loud voice, explaining to them that now, a mutinous spirit having evinced itself in other regiments, and brought many good soldiers to certain destruction, it was better that the distinguished regiments at Meean-Meer, which had done so much good service to the State, should place themselves beyond the reach of temptation by surrendering all means of offence; so they were ordered to—"Pile arms."

Whilst this address was being delivered to the Sepoys, the Eighty-first fell back by subdivisions between the guns; and when the word was given to pile arms, the Native regiments found themselves face to face with a long line of Artillery, and a row of lighted portfires in the hands of the English gunners. At the same time the voice of Colonel Renny rung out clearly with the command, "Eighty-first, load!" and then there was the rattle of the ramrods, which told that there was death in every piece. For a minute the Grenadiers had hesitated to obey the order; but thus confronted, they saw that to resist would be to court instant destruction; so they sullenly resigned themselves to their fate, and piled their muskets to the word of command, whilst the Cavalry unclasped their belts and laid their sabres on the ground. The Eighty-first then came forward and removed the arms, for which a large number of carts were waiting near the parade-grounds, and the Sepoys went baffled and harmless to their Lines.* It was a

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* The arms were taken under a guard of the Eighty-first to the Lahore Fort.

1857. May 13.

great design executed with consummate skill; and if by a first blow a battle was ever won, the battle of the Punjab was fought and won that morning by Montgomery, Corbett, and Renny.

Seizure of the Fort of Lahore.

But this bloodless victory at Meean-Meer was not the whole of that morning's work. Whilst the parade was being held, three companies of the Eighty-first were marching to Lahore to secure the Fort. A wing of the Twenty-sixth Sepoys was on garrison duty there. It was yet wanting two days of the completion of their tour of duty; and unless they wondered why none of their officers were dancing at Meean-Meer, there was nothing to create suspicion that there was anything unwonted in the air. But when suddenly, a little while after sunrise, news came that the Europeans were marching on the Fort, they saw at once that whatever plots were to have been acted out on the 15th, they had been discovered, and that the game was altogether lost. Colonel Smith, with his three companies, marched into the Fort. The Sepoys were ordered to lay down their arms. Resistance was hopeless, and they obeyed to a man. The companies of the Eighty-first were then told off to their various duties, and the Sepoys were marched to Meean-Meer, crestfallen and dispirited, there to learn the history of the eventful parade of the morning. They found the place bristling with the bayonets only of the white men. European picquets and sentries were posted everywhere. Arrangements were being made to secure the safety of the women and children in the English barracks, and messengers were speeding to different parts of the country to warn our countrymen of the danger with which they were threatened.

1857. May 13. Govindghur and Umritsur.

To secure the safety of one point, although that one point were the great capital of the Punjab, had not been, on that 12th of May, the sole object of Montgomery's exertions. With a strong European Brigade, Horse, Foot, and Artillery, the authorities at Meerut had refused to divide their force, and had looked only to the safety of the station. But at Lahore, with only one regiment of English Infantry and a few English gunners, in the face of a still larger body of Native troops; Montgomery took a comprehensive view of all surrounding dangers, and turned the scanty means at his disposal to larger account than most men would have deemed possible. But it was his good fortune to find in the military chief a kindred spirit, and to meet with ready response to all his suggestions. If at that time there had been, on the part of the military, any ominous shakings of heads and feeble wringings of hands, all would have been lost. But to Corbett and Renny nothing seemed impossible. With the perilous work before them of disarming the Meean-Meer troops, they had sent off three companies of their one white regiment to Lahore; but the crisis was one which demanded even further sacrifice of immediate strength. It was certain that there was much to be done with small means; but it is in such daring and such doing that greatness consists. Another company of the Eighty-first was despatched in Native carriages, hastily collected, to afford succour to another place which seemed to be girt with danger.

The fortress of Govindghur, which lies some thirty miles from Lahore, is the military stronghold of the great city of Umritsur, the spiritual capital of the Punjab—a city invested in the minds of the Sikh people with the holiest associations. In no place throughout the Punjab was the influence of the priesthood so powerful; in no place had the spirit of nationality so largely survived the subjugation of the people. There the Sikh inhabitants were more likely to rise than in any part of the country; and to that centre, more than to any other point, were the Sikhs likely to turn their eyes for a given signal of general insurrection. From the first moment Montgomery had recognised the paramount importance of securing the fort and overawing the city. On the morning of the 12th, with the Delhi telegrams before him, he had written to Mr. Cooper, Deputy Commissioner, advising him of what had happened below, telling him that at Lahore they might have to fight for their lives, and urging upon him the immediate necessity of "caring for Govindghur." "I would advise," he said, "every precaution being adopted beforehand, so as to be ready in case of a row. You shall have the best information of all that is going on, and the more quietly we move the better. Do not alarm the Sepoys by any previous acts, but keep the strictest watch on them; and the feelings of the city should be ascertained by every source at your command. Open communication with Jullundhur, and find out what is going on there. My advice is to be fully alive and awake, and prepared for the worst, without creating any alarm by any open act. If the troops should rise, you have the fort to go to, and can defend yourselves." And these stirring words were addressed to a Lieutenant worthy of his chief. Mr. Cooper was not a man to be appalled by any danger; and under him again there was another civil officer, Mr. Macnaghten, Assistant Commissioner, equally ripe for any hazardous enterprise that might fall in the way of his duty. 1857. May 11.

Cool and collected, and fertile in resources and ex-

1857. May. pedients, these two now bethought themselves of turning to the best account every possible circumstance that was in their favour. The report at Umritsur was that the disarmed Sepoys from Meean-Meer were coming in a body to help the regiments at the former place to sieze upon Govindghur. The fortress was garrisoned mainly by Sepoy troops. The only Europeans were the gunners of a weak company of Artillery. There was, however, in the Cantonment a horse-battery, under Captain Waddy, manned by white soldiers, and this was now removed into the fort. Cooper, with a party of Irregular horsemen and some faithful Sikhs, took post opposite the fort gates, whilst Macnaghten went out on the Lahore road to raise a body of villagers to intercept the advance of the rebel Sepoys. The agricultural communities were known to be on our side. They were in a state of unexampled prosperity. There had been one of the richest harvests known for years. Many of the peasantry were hardyJát cultivators, with no sympathetic leanings towards the Sepoys from Hindostan. They promptly responded to the call, and arming themselves with whatsoever weapons they could seize—perhaps only the implements of their calling—went forth to form a living barrier against the wave of insurrection which, it was believed, was pouring in from Lahore. But safety, not danger, was on the road. About midnight, a noise as of a coming multitude was heard. Macnaghten mustered his villagers, and formed across the highway a sturdy rampart of carts, behind which they awaited the approach of the enemy. But they found themselves face to face with a most welcome arrival of friends. It was the company of the Eighty-first, under Chichester, that had been sent to the relief of Govindghur.

Before daylight the relief had been accomplished, and the fortress was safe. 1857. May.

So, for the time, by the exertions of Montgomery and Corbett, and those who worked under them, the two great cities of Lahore and Umritsur were placed beyond the reach of immediate danger. By prompt and unexpected movements on the part of British authority, the revolt of the Sepoys had been paralysed in the very hour of its birth, and on the spots most favourable to its vigorous development. But there were other places, at no great distance, which, although of far less political importance, suggested grave doubts and anxieties to our chiefs; and Montgomery, therefore, on the same day sent expresses to all the principal civil officers in the Punjab, bearing copies of a confidential circular letter, in which they were informed of what had taken place, and warned to be in readiness to act promptly and vigorously in the event of an emergency, but to maintain outward calmness and quietude in the face of danger—to be fully alive to the magnitude of the crisis, but to betray no symptom of alarm or excitement. Instructions were issued for the safe custody of the Treasuries, for the strengthening of the Sikh Police, and for the detention of all Sepoy letters; and it ended with the assuring words: "I have full reliance on your zeal and discretion." Ferozpore.

There were two places, especially, which it was most important to secure, on account of the military resources they contained. At Ferozpore and Phillour were large quantities of munitions of war, with but few European troops to defend the magazines against the too probable assaults of the Sepoys. At the

1857. May 13. The Forty-fifth and the Fifty-seventh.

former place were an arsenal and a magazine of considerable dimensions—the largest in that part of India. Two regiments of Native Infantry and a regiment of Native Cavalry were posted there, and the temper at least of one of the regiments was more than suspected. Appearances, however, were less formidable than at Meean-Meer, for the European strength was greater in proportion to the Sepoy force. The Sixty-first Queen's was cantoned at Ferozpore, and there also were two companies of European Artillery. The station was commanded by Brigadier Innes, an old Sepoy officer of good repute; but he laboured at that time under the disadvantage of being a stranger. He had arrived to take command of the Brigade only on the morning of the 11th. On the following night news came from Lahore that the Sepoys in Meerut and Delhi had risen, and the Brigadier was informed that the Native troops at Lahore were to be disarmed on the following day. On the 13th the Brigadier, anxious to discern for himself the bearing of his men, held a morning parade. Their demeanour was not encouraging. If there were nothing openly defiant in their manner, there was an absence of that easy, careless, unoccupied look which characterises the Sepoy in quiet times. It was plain that something was coming.

The parade dismissed, Brigadier Innes called a Council of War. The members summoned were the principal political officers, the Commandants of the several regiments, and the Commissary of Ordnance. There was no attempt to obscure the fact that the temper of the Sepoys was most suspicious, and that the safety of the station depended on prompt and vigorous action. Instantly to disarm the Native regiments in a body was not held to be a measure that could be attempted without danger; why is not very clear. So it was determined to divide them—a poor half measure, which could scarcely be crowned with success—and to disarm them separately on the morrow. But the morrow of vigorous action never comes. The man for a crisis is he who knows no morrow, but is resolute to strike to-day. The regiments were paraded separately, and marched off to different camping-grounds at a distance from their Lines. The Fifty-seventh quietly obeyed orders, and bivouacked on their allotted space for the night. The Forty-fifth, who were marched through the great Bazaar, lost there the little loyalty that was left in them; for among the buyers and the sellers were scatterers of sedition, and sparks flew about everywhere to bring on a great explosion. It happened, too, that as they went the Sepoys caught sight of the European soldiery, and, believing that a hostile movement was intended, raised a cry that there was treachery abroad, and numbers of them fell out, loaded their muskets, and made a rush for the magazine. The rest marched on to their camping-ground. 1857. May 13.

The outer defences of the magazine were in a state to favour the ingress of the mutineers. The ditch was filled up, and the walls were in ruins; so the Sepoys of the Forty-fifth were soon within the so-called entrenchments. But the magazine itself was less assailable, for it was protected by a high wall, and the only entrance was defended by a guard of Redmond's Europeans. The Sepoys within did their best to assist their comrades with scaling-ladders;* but the English soldiery were more than a match for the

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* Brigadier Innes says that the Sepoys of the Forty-fifth "made a rush at the intrenchments with scaling-ladders, which must have been previously prepared."

1857. May 13—14. mutineers within and without. The former were seized and disarmed; the latter were driven back, but not before Redmond himself had been wounded. The magazine was thus saved, and three more companies of the Sixty-first having been thrown into it, its security was established. But to save the magazine was in effect to sacrifice the Cantonment. With so small a body of European troops, it was impossible to defend one part without exposing another. The very division of the Sepoys, which had been thought an element of strength, was in result only a source of difficulty and danger. The remaining companies of the Sixty-first, menaced on both sides, could do little or nothing to save the Cantonment. For the great Bazaar poured forth its multitudes to plunder and destroy. The bungalows of the European officers, the mess-houses, the churches, Protestant and Catholic, were sacked and fired. The night was a night of terror; but the families of the English officers were safe in the barracks of the Sixty-first, and the fury of the assailants did not fall on our defenceless people.

Meanwhile the Fifty-seventh had remained inactive on their camping-ground, and when morning dawned it was found that there had been but few deserters. The Brigadier, therefore, declared that he would regard them as loyal soldiers, if they would lay down their arms in the European Lines. The Light Company marched in with apparent willingness; but as the others were following, they saw a movement of the Sixty-first, directed against some men of the Forty-fifth, who had been tampering with their more loyal comrades, and believing that the Light Company had been trapped, they broke in dismay and fled across the plain. After some time the efforts of their officers to dispel the fear which had seized them

1857. May 13—14.

were successful, and they were brought back again to their camping-ground. Little by little, as the day advanced, confidence was restored; and before nightfall they had been marched to the European barracks, and had surrendered their arms and the colours of their regiment. But the Sepoys of the Forty-fifth were still roaming about the station, defiant and ripe for mischief; and in the morning there was a report that the mutineers intended to seize the regimental magazines. To remove the ammunition into the general magazine was impossible; so the Brigadier determined to destroy it. Two loud explosions were presently heard, and it was known that the magazines of the Forty-fifth and Fifty-seventh had been blown into the air.

There was now nothing left for the Forty-fifth but flight. Their comrades were disarmed. Their ammunition was destroyed. The Europeans were now comparatively free to act, and the troopers of the Tenth Cavalry had not yet drawn a sabre against their officers. The chances, therefore, were all against the Sepoys; so they took their colours, and turned their faces towards Delhi. And then, for the first time, a spasm of energy seized upon the Brigadier. Some companies of the Sixty-first, with two guns of the Horse Battery, went in pursuit, and then two squadrons of the Tenth Cavalry took up the work of the tired footmen, and with Major Marsden, the Deputy Commissioner—a dashing officer and a bold rider—drove them some twelve miles from Ferozpore, and scattered them over the country, till they threw away their arms and colours, and hid themselves in villages or crouched in the jungle. Some were taken prisoners by their pursuers, some were given up by the villagers; but it is believed that some also suc-

1857. May 13—14. ceeded in joining the Sepoy force within the walls of Delhi.

The great magazine of Ferozpore had been saved; but there was no lustre in the achievement. The British had nothing on which to congratulate themselves but the bare fact. The fact was one of large proportions, for the loss of such supplies of ordnance stores and their gain to the enemy would have weakened our means of offence, and made the work of reconquest far slower and more difficult.* But when we think of what Corbett had done with his one weak regiment at Meean-Meer against a far larger body of Sepoys, we marvel and are mortified as we dwell upon the record of events at Ferozpore. The Sixty-first, supported by the Artillery, could have done what the Eighty-first had been doing, and might have saved the Cantonment. But Innes, shrinking from responsibility, resorted to half-measures, and accomplished only a half-success. We must not, however, judge him too severely. He did at least as much as most Native Infantry officers, accustomed only to the routine of quiet times, the harness of the regulations, and the supremacy of the Adjutant-General's office, would have done, and indeed afterwards did, when suddenly brought face to face with a great and trying emergency. Perhaps it is less strange that he only half succeeded, than that he did not fail outright.

Phillour. There was yet another place of great military im-

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* Mr. Cave-Browne says: "Thus, although the Cantonment had to some extent been sacrificed, there was the consolation of knowing the magazine was saved. Had it fallen into the hands of the mutineers, with its piles of shot and shells, its pits of gunpowder, and its well-stored armoury, Delhi had not been re-won under four times four months."

1857. May.

portance, the seizure of which was supposed to form part of the first great group of measures designed for the subversion of British authority in the Punjab, and which it was, therefore, of the utmost moment to secure. This was the fort of Phillour, lying between Jullundhur and Loodhianah, on the great high road to Delhi. It had been described as the "key of the Punjab;" but, like other keys of the same kind, it was by no means in safe keeping. A considerable arsenal was planted there, but there were no European troops to protect it. When the day's work was done, and the Ordnance Commissariat officers had gone to their homes, there was not a white face to be seen in the fort. The Sepoys of the Third Infantry garrisoned the place and occupied the adjacent Cantonment. At a distance of some twenty-four miles was the military station of Jullundhur, where the Eighth Queen's were posted, with two Native Infantry regiments, a regiment of Native Cavalry, and a proportionate force of Artillery. The Infantry regiments —the Thirty-sixth and the Sixty-first—were known to be tainted. They had been in recent contact with corps which had already broken into rebellion. That these Jullundhur regiments had, in concert with the Third, plotted the seizure of the fort of Phillour, with its guns and stores, was believed, if it was not proved to be a fact; and only prompt action could avert the threatened disaster. The work to be done was very much the same work as had been so successfully accomplished at Meean-Meer, and with the same means. The European regiment and the Artillery might have disarmed the Sepoys and secured the fort of Phillour.

The Brigade was under the command of Brigadier Johnstone, a Queen's officer of the regulation pattern.

1857. May 11—12. He was absent from Jullundhur when news came of the great events at Meerut and Delhi, and Colonel Hartley, of the Eighth Queen's, was in temporary command of the force. On the 11th, the first vague tidings of disaster were passing along the telegraph wires through Jullundhur to Lahore. No action was taken on that day; the story might be exaggerated; it might, therefore, be better to "wait for further information." Next day all doubt was removed, and Colonel Hartley took counsel with the chief civil and military officers at the station. It was plain to every one that, as an essential measure of security, Phillour must be occupied by European troops. It was agreed, therefore, that a detachment of the Eighth should be sent off secretly under cover of the night. Other measures of precaution were to be taken. The guns, duly covered by European detachments, were to be posted so as to sweep the parade-grounds of the Native troops, and the gunners were to be always at their posts. Europeans from Olpherts's* troop of Horse Artillery were to act as Cavalry and patrol the station. The ladies and children were placed either in the Royal Barracks or in the Artillery schoolroom and library. Every officer in the Cantonment was constantly alert, day and night, in case of the anticipated surprise; and as it was expected that the Native Cavalry troopers would make a rush upon the guns, heaps of stones were scattered about so as to impede the advance of the horsemen, and to throw them into confusion whilst our grape-shot was acting upon them. But with these defensive measures our action ceased. If there was any thought of striking the arms from the hands of the Native soldiery it was speedily abandoned. The reason given is, that in the neighbourhood of Jullundhur were several smaller stations occupied only by Sepoy troops, and that if the regiments there had been disarmed, their comrades at Hosheyapore, Kangra, Noorpoor, and Phillour would have risen against their defenceless officers at those places, and would have streamed down upon Jullundhur, recovered the arms of the regiments there, and set the whole country in a blaze. 1857. May 12.

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* Henry Olpherts of the Bengal Artillery—cousin of William Olpherts of the same corps, then serving at Benares.—*Ante*, p. 82, &c.

Meanwhile, at Phillour, on that 12th of May, the Artillery Subaltern Griffith, who, as an Assistant Commissary of Ordnance, was in charge of the magazine, was doing all that resolute manhood could do to protect the precious charge confided to him. Intelligence of the outbreak had been brought by an officer of the Telegraph Department, who came laden with help in the shape of the necessary apparatus to place the interior of the fort in direct communication with Jullundhur. In the course of a few hours this was done, and a message came right into Griffith's private office-room, informing him that succours were on their way. Hopefully, cheerfully, the Artillery Subaltern then, with a little handful of Europeans attached to the magazine, addressed himself to the work of holding the Fort during the critical hours of the darkness. At sunset the gates were closed. A gun was brought down to the gateway, and all through the night the little party of Englishmen kept guard, relieving each other with ready portfire, and keeping watch from the ramparts to catch the first sound of any commotion in Cantonments which might indicate that the Sepoys had risen. But all was quiet in the station, and all was quiet within the Fort. The Sepoys of the Third were not yet ready. The appointed hour of revolt had not come. So the

1857. May. night passed, and the day dawned; but ere the dawn had come the looked-for deliverance was at hand. A hundred and fifty men of the Eighth Foot, two Horse Artillery guns, and a party of Punjabee Horse appeared under the walls of the Fort. The gate was thrown open. The relieving force marched in; and, to the dismay of the Sepoys, European sentries were posted everywhere in their place, and the arsenal of Phillour was saved. It was truly a good night's work; for the Fort might have become the rallying-place of all the mutinous regiments in that part of the country, and it was preserved, as has been already shown, to be of immense importance to us in our subsequent retributory operations.*

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* See *ante*, pp. 188—189, for the story of the equipment of the siege train and its march from Phillour.

CHAPTER II.

PESHAWUR—INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DANGERS—THE CIVIL AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES—EDWARDES—NICHOLSON—COTTON—CHAMBERLAIN—THE COUNCIL AT PESHAWUR—ARRANGEMENTS FOR A MOVABLE COLUMN—SIR JOHN LAWRENCE AT RAWUL-PINDEE—DESPATCH OF TROOPS TO DELHI—THE MARCH OF THE GUIDE CORPS.

Peshawur, May, 1857.

BUT the place, to which, of all the military stations in the Punjab, the thoughts of men were turned at this time with the deepest interest, was the frontier-post of Peshawur. There, in May, 1857, was a strong defensive force of all arms—the native troops greatly outnumbering the Europeans. There were two regiments of Queen's troops, with Artillery, horse and foot, the whole, perhaps, amounting to little more than two thousand men, whilst the native troops might be counted up at nearly four times the number. In the neighbourhood, at Nowshera and Hote-Murdan, were other components of the brigade, planted in the Peshawur Valley. At the former place were the Inniskilling Dragoons, nearly a thousand strong, and at the latter was the famous Guide Corps, under Captain Daly, which, though recruited in the country, was believed to be as staunch as if every soldier were an English yeoman. Counting up all the components of the brigade in the Valley, it may be said, in round

May. 1857.

numbers, that there were two thousand five hundred Europeans and ten thousand natives, and that only a tithe of the latter could be trusted by their English officers.

External dangers.

These were heavy odds against us; but they did not constitute the main sources of danger. If the British troops were free to act against the mutinous Sepoys, there could be little doubt that, well handled, they could dispose of all comers. But beyond the frontier, as I have already briefly said,* were other great and imminent perils. If the Afghan tribes occupying the passes beyond Peshawur—the Afredis, the Eusofzyes, the Mohmunds, and other wild clans, whom we had been endeavouring to reclaim from their lawless habits, and not wholly without success—had been incited, partly in the interests of the faith and partly in the interests of plunder, to pour down upon us a great mass of humanity, predatory and fanatic, we might have been simply overwhelmed by the irruption. Our English manhood could not have sustained the burden of the double calamity, if the internal and external enemy had risen against us at the same time.

And the external enemy, which might in such a crisis have risen against us, was not merely a gathering of these barbarous mountain tribes. Beyond the passes were the Afghans of Caubul and Candahar. The friendship of Dost Mahomed had been purchased by our British gold, but he had never ceased to deplore the dismemberment of his empire by the Sikhs; he had never ceased to hanker after the recovery of the Peshawur Valley, now part of a British province by the intelligible right of conquest. For this he had already risked much—for this he might risk much

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* *Ante*, page 404, with reference to Lord Canning's previsions.

1857. May.

more. This eager longing after Peshawur has been described as the madness of a life. It might, at such a time as this, be stronger than the teachings of experience—stronger than the dictates of sagacity—stronger even than the great national avarice which was burning within him. It was difficult to feel any confidence in his forbearance at such a time. A well-developed mutiny of the Sepoy troops in the Peshawur Valley would afford such an opportunity as might never arise again in the history of the nation. The formidable British force which guarded the frontier would then be as a chained giant, powerless to resist a foreign invasion. If then the Ameer were to raise the green standard and to call upon the chiefs and people of Afghanistan, in the name of the great prophet, to pour down upon the Feringhees, who in days past had so humiliated them—who had rooted up their vines and destroyed their orchards, and set their mark upon the capital city of their empire—all the great chiefs and the leading tribes would have gathered around him, and a great flood of Mahomedanism would have poured upon us, swollen, perhaps, by more distant streams. It was difficult to say, at such a time, what might not be written down in the great Book of the Future. A very little thing might turn the tide against us and overwhelm us. The natural feeling, therefore, amongst our people was one of perilous insecurity; and the natives of India asked each other, then and afterwards, with significant earnestness of inquiry, "What news from Peshawur?"*

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* Mr. Cave Brown gives the following suggestive anecdote in his Narrative. The incident occurred when he was at Umritsur, in the middle of June: "One of the most influential of the Sikh Sirdars was paying his usual visit of courtesy to the head civilian of the station. In the course of conversation, the latest news from Camp (Delhi) was exultingly mentioned, when the Sikh, seeming to pay little heed to what

Political charge of Peshawur. 1857. May.

At this time the political charge of Peshawur was in the hands of two of the most remarkable men to be found among the younger officers of the Indian army. Both had been reared under the Lawrences; and in that mixed service known in India as "political employment," which at one time demands the exercise of the highest energies of the military officer and at another of the finest qualities of the civil administrator, had ripened into soldier-statesmen of the best kind. Of Herbert Edwardes I have already spoken.* He was Commissioner at Peshawur. John Nicholson was his lieutenant, or deputy-commissioner. They were close friends, full of love and admiration of each other. If either had greater love or admiration for another friend at a distance, that other friend was Henry Lawrence, whom both revered and strove to imitate, walking not unworthily in the footsteps of their great exemplar.

John Nicholson.

The son of a physician in Dublin, who died at the commencement of a professional career in which were the germs of a great success, John Nicholson had entered the Company's service as a cadet of Infantry on the Bengal establishment at the age of sixteen. He was still a boy when the chances of service sent him with his regiment—the Twenty-Seventh—into Afghanistan; and when in that dreary, sorrow-laden winter of 1841 the national spirit of the tribes rose against the intrusion of the English, young Nicholson, after much good promise of the finest soldierly qua-

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was generally received with so much joy, asked: 'What news from Peshawur?' 'Excellent; all quiet there,' he was told. 'That,' said he, 'is the best news you can give me!' 'Why do you always ask so anxiously about Peshawur?' the civilian said. The Sirdar did not at once reply, but, with much significance of manner, took up the end of his scarf and began rolling it up from the corner between his finger and thumb. 'If Peshawur goes, the whole Punjab will be rolled up in rebellion like this.' "

* Vol. i., page 26, *et seq.*

"lities, became a prisoner at Ghuznee and afterwards a captive in the hands of Akbar Khan. Rescued by General Pollock, he returned to the provinces of India, and when again the peace of India was broken by the incursion of the Sikh army, John Nicholson, after a brief period of service in the Commissariat Department, was, on the recommendation of Henry Lawrence, who had taken note of his fine soldierly qualities, appointed by Lord Hardinge to instruct and discipline the Infantry regiments of Golab Singh, the new ruler of Cashmere. He was afterwards appointed an assistant to Lawrence, who was then Resident at Lahore, and became permanently attached to the Political Service. From that time John Nicholson, independent of military rank, was released from the trammels of his youth. He saw his opportunity before him, and he bided his time. His desires were towards military action, and in due course that which he had longed for came; the Sikh chiefs were rising against the military occupation and political interference of the English, and John Nicholson soon found that he had work to do in the field. He did it with a cool head and a stout heart, and, although his freedom of speech sometimes gave offence to his seniors, he made it clear to those under whom he served that he was a man to be trusted. The great conflict for the supremacy of the Punjab came; Nicholson was in the midst of it—at Chillianwallah, at Guzerat, and in the front of Gilbert's pursuit of the Afghan auxiliaries. And when the country became a British province Sir Henry Lawrence enlisted his services into the commission, and, toiling on for years on the outskirts of civilisation, he manifested an extraordinary aptitude for the coercion and the government of barbarous

1857. May

1857. May. tribes. After this service in Bunnoo, where the wild people deified him, he had for a little space thought of leaving the Punjab and serving under his old master in Oude, or of taking part in the Persian war as a commander of Irregulars. But the cloud which seemed to overshadow his prospects soon passed away, and in the spring of 1857 he was, as I have before said, at Peshawur as the lieutenant of his friend Herbert Edwardes, or in other and more official words, Deputy-commissioner of the division. Only a little time before, Edwardes, being on a brief visit to Calcutta, had said to Lord Canning, "You may rely upon this—that if ever there is a desperate deed to be done in India, John Nicholson is the man to do it." And now the truth of these friendly but prophetic words was about to be realised. The hour had come and the man was present.

At this time John Nicholson was in his thirty-sixth year. Of lofty stature, of a handsome open countenance, with strong decision of character stamped upon it, he carried with him a noble presence, which commanded general observation, and among the natives excited awe. His manner was not genial. Some said it was cold; it was certainly reserved; and the first impressions which he made on men's minds were often unfavourable. His words were few; and there was a directness and authoritativeness about them which made strangers think that he was dogmatical; perhaps, overbearing. But those manifestations were not the growth of an arrogant self-conceit, but of great conscientiousness and self-reliance. For he thought much before he spoke, and what he said was but the utterance of a strong conviction, which had taken shape, not hastily, in his mind; and he was not one to suppress what he felt to be the truth, or to mince nice phrases of expression. Still it would be flattery to deny, or to obscure, the fact, that he had at one time little control over a naturally fiery temper, and that, as he grew older, he brought it with difficulty under subjection. There could have been nothing better for one of Nicholson's temperament than constant intercourse with such a man as Herbert Edwardes; and he now gratefully acknowledged in his heart that his character was ripening under these good influences, and that, please God, much that was crude and imperfect in it might soon disappear.* 1857. May.

Sydney Cotton.

It was another happy circumstance at that time, that the Brigade was commanded by an officer altogether of the right stamp. Brigadier Sydney Cotton—a true soldier, and one of a family of soldiers—commanded the troops in the Peshawur Valley. He had seen service in many parts of the world. Owing no extraneous advantages to his family connexions, he had ever been one of those hard-working, unshrinking, conscientious military officers, who do not serve the State less ungrudgingly because it has been ungrateful to them, but who, rising by slow gradation, never have an opportunity of going to the front and showing of what stuff they are made, until age has enfeebled their powers. Of his forty-seven years of service in the Royal Army the greater number had been passed in India. But he was of a constitution well adapted to sustain the assaults of the

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* In 1849, Sir Henry Lawrence wrote to him: "Let me advise you as a friend to curb your temper, and bear and forbear with Natives and Europeans, and you will soon be as distinguished a civilian as you are a soldier. Don't think it is necessary to say all you think to every one. The world would be one mass of tumult if we all gave candid opinions of each other. I admire you sincerely as much as any man can do, but say thus much as a general warning." In writing this, Lawrence wrote as one conscious of the same natural infirmity in himself. He had manfully struggled against, and in a great measure overcome it.

1857. May.

climate, and his threescore years had taken from him little of the vigour and activity of his prime. Of good stature, but of a spare, light frame, he had all the external attributes of a good soldier, and there were few men in the whole range of the service who were more familiar with the duties of his profession in all its grades. Constant intercourse with the British soldier, in the Barrack and in the Camp, had not only made him thoroughly acquainted with his habits and feelings, but had developed within him a tender and tolerant affection for, a generous sympathy with, all who worked under him. Few commanding officers had been more careful of the common soldier than Sydney Cotton, or had more thoroughly earned his confidence. He was known and acknowledged to be one of the best regimental officers in the Army. No opportunity until now had been afforded to him of testing the higher qualities, which enable a man to face large responsibilities, and to combat great difficulties and dangers with a serene front. But the latent power was in him; the opportunity had now come, and he was equal to it. Edwardes and Nicholson had confidence in the Brigadier; and although, like many of his class, he had an habitual contempt for civilians and soldier-civilians, he could not help thanking God, in the depths of his heart, that circumstances had now rendered him the fellow-labourer, in a great cause, of two soldiers, of whom any army in the world might be proud—two soldiers, though vested with civil authority, as eager to take the field and to share its dangers, as though they had never left the Camp.

First tidings of the outbreak. May 12.

These three men were at Peshawur, when, on the 12th of May, news reached them to the effect that one of the greatest military stations in Upper India was in a blaze, and that the European regiments were on the defensive. Edwardes, who had an assured faith in the good results of the Afghan policy, which he had so successfully advocated, had little apprehension that Peshawur would be lost to the Empire. "As to this place," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, "it will be the last to go; and not go at all, if the intermediate country be occupied by a good field-force engaged in making stern examples. The celebrated Sixty-fourth Native Infantry is here;* and the report in the station is, that the Native regiments here are prepared to follow whatever lead is set them by the Twenty-first Native Infantry, which, *cæteris paribus*, is a good one." But he did not, although not fearing for Peshawur, under-estimate the magnitude of the crisis. He knew that a great struggle was approaching, and that the energies of the British nation must be strained to the utmost. He knew that, in the Punjab, there would be much strife and contention, and that every Englishman in the Province would have to put forth all his strength. He was a man ever ripe for action, and he had in John Nicholson a meet companion. "I have not heard yet," he wrote in the letter above quoted to the Chief Commissioner, "whether you are at Pindee or Murree; but as we have received here telegraphic news of the 10th of May from Meerut that the Native troops were in open mutiny, and the Europeans on the defensive only, I write a line to tell you that Nicholson and I are of opinion that a strong movable column of reliable troops (Europeans and Irregulars) should take the field in the Punjab at once—perhaps at Lahore would be best, so as to get between the

1857.
May.

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* See, for an account of a previous mutiny of this regiment, *ante*, vol. i., pages 281—289.

1857. May 12. stations which *have* mutinied and those that have *not;* and move on the first station that stirs next; and bring the matter, without further delay, to the bayonet. This disaffection will never be talked down now. It must be put down—and the sooner blood be let the less of it will suffice. Nicholson desires me to tell you that he would be ready to take command of them, and I need not add the pleasure it would give me to do the same. We are both at your disposal, remember; and if this business goes, as it soon will, to a question of personal influence and exertion, either of us could raise a serviceable body out of the Derajat in a short time." And he added in a postscript, "Whatever you do about a movable force, do it at once. There is no time to be lost in getting to the struggle which is to settle the matter."

Neville Chamberlain. There was then at no great distance from Peshawur another man, whose counsel and assistance were eagerly desired in this conjuncture. It was felt that the presence of Neville Chamberlain was needed to complete that little confederacy of heroes, on the wisdom and courage of whom the safety of the frontier, under Providence, mainly depended. Brigadier Chamberlain at this time commanded the Punjab Irregular Force. He was in the prime of his life and the fulness of his active manhood. Of a fair stature, of a light but sinewy frame, he had every physical qualification that could make a dashing leader of Irregular Horse. And in early youth, he had acquired a reputation as an intrepid and eager soldier, who was ever in the front where danger was to be faced and glory was to be gained. On the battle-fields of Afghanistan and the Punjab, he had shown what was the temper of his steel, and he had carried off more honourable wounds in hand-to-hand encounter

1857. May 12.

with the enemy than any of his cotemporaries in the service. It was said, indeed, that his great fault as a soldier was, that he exposed himself too recklessly to danger. But with this irrepressible military enthusiasm, which had well nigh cost him his life, he had a large fund of sound common sense, was wise in council, and had military knowledge far beyond that of the bold swordsman who heads against heavy odds a charge of Horse. And with all these fine qualities he combined a charming modesty of demeanour—a general quietude and simplicity of character, which not only forbade all kinds of self-assertion, but even shrunk from the commendations of others. He had been selected, as the fittest man in the Army, to command the Punjab Irregular Force, of which I have before spoken,* and which had already won immense confidence in the Punjab, and no little reputation in more distant parts of India. Next to the European Regiments, this was the most reliable portion of the military force in the Punjab—indeed, the only other reliable part of the great Army planted there for the defence of the frontier. It was of extreme importance at this time that Chamberlain and Cotton should be in communication as to the best means of co-operating, especially with respect to the proposed Movable Column; and so Edwardes wrote to him, asking him to ride over to Peshawur and to take counsel with him and the chief military authorities—a measure of which they entirely approved. Chamberlain at once responded to the summons, and hastened over to Peshawur.

The Peshawur Council. May 13.

So, on the 13th of May, an hour or two after his arrival, a Council of War was held at the house of General Reed. The members present were the Ge-

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* *Ante*, page 422.

1857. May 13. neral, the Brigadier, Edwardes, Chamberlain, and Nicholson. Half an hour before their assembling, Edwardes had received a telegraphic message from John Lawrence approving the formation of the Movable Column, and announcing that the native troops at Meean-Meer had that morning been disarmed. There was no division in the Council. The military and political authorities at Peshawur were moved by a common spirit, and acted as one man. It was agreed that in the conjuncture which had arisen, all civil and military power in the Punjab should be concentrated on one spot; that to this effect General Reed should assume the command of all the troops in the province, that he should join the Chief Commissioner at Rawul-Pindee, or at such place as might be the seat of the local government at the time, in order that he might be in constant intercourse with the Chief Commissioner, and harmonious action might thus be secured between the civil and military authorities. The real object of this did not lie on the surface. There was an occult meaning in it, which caused Edwardes and Nicholson to smile complacently at the Council-table, and to exchange many a joke in private. This concentration of the military authority of the Punjab in the person of General Reed—a worthy old officer, without very strong opinions of any kind—really transferred it to the hands of the political officers. It was a great thing not to be checked—not to be thwarted—not to be interfered with—not to have regulation, and routine, and all sorts of nervous fears and anxieties thrust upon them from a distance. It was desirable, however, that the semblance of military authority should be maintained throughout the land—that the rights of seniority should be outwardly respected—that every man should be in his own place, as upon parade, and that a General should at all times be a General, even though for purposes of action he should be merely a stock or a stone. The Natives of India watch these things shrewdly and observingly, and estimate, with rare sagacity, every indication of a failure of the wondrous union and discipline, which they look upon as the very root of our supremacy.* But, though it was at all times and in all places, desirable to keep up this show of a wonderful machinery, working wheel by wheel with perfect regularity of action, it was not always expedient to maintain the reality of it. There were times and conjunctures when the practical recognition of the authority of rank, which in the Indian army was only another name for age, might wisely be foregone; and such a crisis had now to be confronted. On the whole, it was a fortunate circumstance that just such a man as General Reed—a man not obstinate, not wedded to any opinions or foregone conclusions of his own, and yet not more cautious, irresolute, or fearful of responsibility than the majority of old soldiers who had never been called upon to face a momentous crisis—was then the senior officer in that part of

1857 May 13.

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* In the first volume of this history I observed, with immediate reference to the conflict between Lord Dalhousie and Sir Charles Napier, that these divisions of authority were generally regarded, by the more intelligent natives of India, as proofs of weakness in the British Government, and that some regarded them as precursors of our downfall. I have since read the following confirmation of this opinion in the Correspondence of the Duke of Wellington: "Of this I am certain," wrote the Duke to Lord Combermere, "that any public and continued difference between the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief is prejudicial to the public interests, and cannot be allowed to exist. It is prejudicial for this reason. It shakes the authority of Government to its very foundation; and while such differences continue, every little man, who takes part with either one or the other, becomes of importance. The interests of the party are the great object. Those of the public are laid aside and forgotten, and even injured with impunity."

1857. May 13. the country; indeed, under the Commander-in-Chief, the senior officer of the Bengal Presidency. He had good sense of the most serviceable kind—the good sense to understand his own deficiencies, and to appreciate the fact that there were abler men than himself about him. So, whilst he was rising to the honourable position of military Dictator of the Punjab, he wisely ceased to dictate. The time had come for the universal domination of Brains—John Lawrence, with Herbert Edwardes for his Wuzeer, then took the supreme direction of affairs, always consulting the chief military authorities, but quietly educating them, and flattering them with the belief that they dictated when they only obeyed.

The Movable Column. The next resolution was that a Movable Column of reliable troops, as before suggested, should be organised, to take the field at once, under a competent commander, and to operate upon any point where rebellion might bristle up, or danger might threaten us in the Punjab. A suspected Sepoy garrison was to be removed from the fort of Attock—an important position, which it was of immense moment to secure; and our communications were to be placed beyond the reach of danger by posting at the Attock ferry a Pathan guard under a tried and trusty Pathan leader. At the same time other changes in the disposition of the troops were to be made; the Native regiments being drawn into the posts at which they might least readily co-operate with each other, and most easily be overawed by the Europeans. At the same time, it was determined that Brigadier Chamberlain should proceed at once to Rawul-Pindee to take counsel with the Chief Commissioner; and that John Nicholson, if his services were not called for in a military capacity, should accompany the Movable

Column as its political officer. These proposals were telegraphed to Sir John Lawrence, and all but the last were cordially accepted. The Chief Commissioner thought that Nicholson's services were required at Peshawur, and in that particular juncture it was believed that the public service would suffer by his departure. Moreover, he had a faith, that had been bravely earned, in the general efficiency of his assistants all over the country. And he knew that it would not be wise to supersede local authority by a delegate from Head-Quarters. And never, perhaps, did John Lawrence exhibit his instinctive sagacity more clearly than in this first resolution to place every officer in the Punjab on his own particular stand-point of responsibility, and thus to evoke to the utmost all the power within him. 1857. May 13.

The details of the Movable Column were soon jotted down, but it was not so easy to settle the question of command. Cotton and Edwardes, Chamberlain and Nicholson, were all equally eager to place themselves at its head. It was to be determined only by superior authority; so General Reed made a reference to the Commander-in-Chief. Edwardes could not be spared from the frontier, where he was a tower of strength: the names of Cotton, Chamberlain, and Nicholson, were submitted to Head-Quarters. And the telegraph wires brought back the intimation that General Anson had selected Neville Chamberlain as the leader of the column.

The Rawul-Pindee Council. May 16.

On the 16th, General Reed and Brigadier Chamberlain joined the Chief Commissioner at Rawul-Pindee, and on that evening Colonel Edwardes received a telegraphic message summoning him to join the Head-Quarters Council. Making over his own particular charge to Nicholson, he proceeded at once

1857. May 16. to Pindee, and was soon in eager but confident discussion alike of the present and the future. The stern resolution and unflinching courage of John Lawrence were then lighted up by the radiant aspect of Herbert Edwardes, whose cheerfulness was so unfailing, and whose political wisdom so often glinted out in bright flashes of wit, that the Councils of War which were held during that gathering at Rawul-Pindee were said to be "great fun."* Never, perhaps, in the face of such enormous difficulty and danger, shaking the very foundations of a great empire, did men meet each other with brighter faces or more cheering words. It was an occasion on which the eventual success of our resistance depended, more than on all else, upon the heart and hope of our great chiefs, on whose words all men hung, and in whose faces they looked for the assurance and encouragement which inspired and animated all beneath them. It was said of John Lawrence, at that time, that he was as calm and confident as if he had been contemplating only the most common-place events, and that Herbert Edwardes was in higher spirits, more natural and more unrestrained, than he had ever been known to be by men who had served with him in more quiet times. A great and ennobling faith was settling down in the breasts of our Punjabee chiefs. It had dawned upon them that it would be their work, not merely to save the Province, but to save the Empire. 1857. May 16.

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* It may be mentioned here that the capital story, repeated in so many cotemporary memoirs, to the effect that Sir John Lawrence, being at the whist-table, answered a telegraphic message from General Anson with the words, "Clubs are trumps —not spades; when in doubt play a big one"—originated in a joke of Herbert Edwardes. The story always was one of doubtful authenticity, as it was less likely that Sir John Lawrence than that General Anson would be caught at the whist-table. The fact is, that Lawrence, Edwardes, Charles Nicholson, and one or two others were together, when a telegram from Mr. Barnes was received, stating that there was some talk at Umballah of entrenching, and not marching. Edwardes humorously suggested that a telegram should be despatched to "Major A. wherever he may be found," saying, "When in doubt play a trump—act up to your own principles"—the belief being that General Anson had written the well-known work on whist by "Major A." Charles Nicholson then suggested as an amendment the words, "Clubs are trumps, not spades." Lawrence consented, and the pregnant sentence was despatched to Mr. Barnes, who, doubtless, communicated it to General Anson.

History will take the measure of men's minds in accordance with the extent to which they looked upon this crisis, as a local or an imperial one, and directed their efforts to the suppression of the one or the other. Physically, it is known rarely to happen that men, who have a clear, steady sight to discern distinctly near objects, have that wide range of vision which enables them to comprehend what is observable in the distance; and the faculty, which, either on a large or a small scale, enables a man to grasp moral objects, both immediate and remote, is equally rare. General Hewitt's small mind took in nothing beyond the idea that, as he lived at Meerut, it was his duty to save Meerut. But the great intellect of Sir John Lawrence grasped all the circumstances of the imperial danger, and held them in a vice. He had his own particular province in hand — carefully and minutely; no single post overlooked, no single point neglected. He knew what every man under him was doing, what every man was expected to do; there was nothing that happened, or that might happen, in the Punjab over which he did not exercise the closest vigilance; but the struggle for supremacy at his own doors never obscured the distant vision of the great imperial danger. He never domesticated his policy; he never localised his efforts. He never said to himself, "The Punjab is my especial charge. I will defend the Punjab. I have no responsibility beyond it." He would have weakened the Punjab to

1857. May. strengthen the Empire. He would, perhaps, have sacrificed the Punjab to save the Empire. In this, indeed, the strength of his character—his capacity for government on a grand scale—was evinced at the outset, and, as time advanced, it manifested itself in every stage of the great struggle more signally than before.*

It was felt in the Pindee Council that, "whatever gave rise to the mutiny, it had settled down into a struggle for empire, under Mahomedan guidance, with the Mogul capital for its centre."† From that time, this great centre of the Mogul capital was never beyond the range of John Lawrence's thoughts—never beyond the reach of his endeavours. Seen, as it were, through the telescope of long years of political experience, sweeping all intervening time and space, the great city of Delhi, which he knew so well, was brought close to his eyes; and he felt that he had a double duty. Much as he might think of Lahore, Umritsur, or Peshawur, he thought still more of Delhi. He felt as lesser men would not have felt, that it was his duty in that emergency to give back to the Empire, in time of intestine war, all that he could give from that abundance of military strength which had been planted in the province at a time when the defence of the frontier against external aggressions was held to be the first object of imperial importance. Knowing well the terrible scarcity of reliable troops in all the country below the Punjab, and the encouraging effect of the occupation of Delhi by the rebel troops, he resolved to pour down upon the imperial city every regiment that he could send to its relief. From that time his was the directing mind which influenced for good all that was done from Upper India, working downwards to rescue our people from the toils of the enemy, and to assert our dominion under the walls of Delhi, where the great battle of supremacy was to be fought. 1857. May.

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* A fuller account of Sir John Lawrence's internal policy is reserved for another chapter.

† These are the words of Colonel Edwardes in his Peshawur Military Report—a document of great interest and ability, and one most serviceable to the historian.

The march of the Guide Corps.

And the first succour, which he sent, was the famous Guide Corps, which Henry Lawrence had designed ever to be ready for service—ever to be the first for action. It was at that time stationed at Hote-Murdan, under the command of Captain Henry Daly. On the morning of the 13th, two officers, who had gone over to Nowshera to attend a ball which had been given at that station, brought to Hote-Murdan tidings that the Fifty-fifth Regiment at the former place had received orders to relieve the Guide Corps at the latter. All was then excitement and conjecture. No man knew the reason of the movement; no man knew what had happened or what was coming. "No uproar," it was said, "along the line of frontier. No incursion to repress. No expedition to join." The story told, at six in the morning, was true; and two hours afterwards its truth was confirmed by the sight of the approaching regiment in the distance. About the same time an express came in from Peshawur, bringing orders for the Guide Corps to march at once to Nowshera. With the official orders came a private letter from Edwardes to Daly, which cast a terrible glare of light upon all that had before been obscure. "That you may better know how to act on the enclosed instruction to move to Nowshera, I write privately to tell you that telegraphic news of open mutiny among the Native troops at Meerut having reached

1857 May. us here to-day, we think a movable column should be assembled in the Punjab and get between the stations that have gone wrong and those that have not, and put down further disaffection by force. It is obviously necessary to constitute such a column of reliable troops, and therefore it has been proposed to get the Guides and Her Majesty's Twenty-seventh Regiment together without delay as a part of the scheme." So Daly at once mustered his Guides, and before midnight they were at Nowshera. He had not long laid himself down to rest, when he was awakened by an express from Cotton ordering the Guides to move upon Attock. At gun-fire they recommenced their journey, and before noon, after a trying march, under a fierce sun, they reached their destination, scorched and dried, but full of spirit and ripe for action. "The Punjab," wrote the gallant leader of the Guides on that day, "is paying back India all she cost her, by sending troops stout and firm to her aid."

May 16. From Attock, after securing the Fort, and holding it until the arrival of a detachment sent from Kohat, Daly marched, two hours after midnight, on the morning of the 16th, in the light of the rising moon, which soon was obscured by a blinding dust-storm. When it cleared away, the air was fresh and pleasant, and the corps marched on, a distance of more than twenty miles, until, at eight o'clock, it bivouacked in a grove of peach and apricot trees, which enabled them to dispense with tents. At midnight, after a few hours of early slumber, the trumpet-call was again heard, and they resumed their march, in the cool morning air, through a beautiful country skirted by a range of verdant hills; and on the morning of the 18th they were at Rawul-Pindee.

There was nothing needed to stimulate a man of Daly's high enthusiasm, but it was refreshing and invigorating to be, even for a little while, in close and familiar intercourse with such men as Lawrence, Chamberlain, and Edwardes—and a fourth, Hugh James, then acting as Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, who had a noble spirit and a high intelligence worthy of the confidence of his great master. There is nothing more delightful than this attrition of ardent natures. Great men become greater by such sympathetic contact. It was a source of infinite rejoicing to Daly to learn that the Guides, which might have done great service as a part of the Movable Column in the Punjab, were honoured by being the first regiment selected to move down to the relief of Delhi. "The Guides, I believe," wrote Daly in his journal on the 18th of May, "are to march down and to show to the people Native troops willing and loyal. I shall rejoice at this, and march down with all my heart." And so they marched down—with a great enthusiasm stirring their gallant leader, and through him, all who followed; officers and men, moved by one common heroism of the best kind. "I am making, and I mean to make," wrote Daly on the 1st of June, "the best march that has been heard of in the land!" And nobly he fulfilled his promise. 1857. May 18.

At this time he had reached Loodhianah. In the early morning of the 4th the Guides were at Umballah, and on the 6th they were at Kurnaul. There they found Mr. Le Bas and Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, who had escaped from Delhi, and were eager to punish some neighbouring villages, which were believed to have harboured insurgents, and to be full of people bent upon the plunder of the Feringhees. Eager as Daly was to push on to Delhi, and reluctant June 1—4.

1857. June.

to destroy wholesale, in retaliation for what might only be an offence of the few, he for some time resisted the retributory eagerness of the civilians, but at length yielded to their wishes, and sent the Guides forward to the attack. The villagers fled in dismay; some were killed on their retreat; others were made prisoners; and soon the blaze of their burning houses could be seen from many a distant mile. But the mercy of the Christian officer was shown towards the helpless and unoffending; Daly saved the women and the children, and helped them to remove the little property they possessed.

The delay was unfortunate. The unwelcome duty thus forced upon the Guide Corps deprived it of the coveted honour of taking part in the first attack upon the Delhi mutineers. Had not the civilians, in that great zeal for the desolation of villages, which distinguished many, perhaps too many of them, before the year was at an end, arrested Daly's onward march, he would have been present with his corps at the battle of Budlee-ka-serai. As it was, he marched into camp a day too late.* The battle had been fought, but the corps, by the march alone, had covered itself with glory, and it was received on its arrival by the Delhi Field Force with ringing cheers. There were now two Native regiments in the British camp which all men trusted—the Goorkahs under Reid, and the Punjabee Guide Corps under Daly. And

June 9. he Guide Corps at Delhi.

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* "The morning after the battle the Guides entered camp under the command of Captain Daly. They were already well known as one of the finest regiments in India. They were almost all of Afghan or Persian race, and consisted of three troops of cavalry, perhaps the best riders in our pay, and six companies of infantry armed with the rifle. They had marched in this, the hottest time of the year, from near Peshawur to Delhi, a distance of five hundred and eighty miles in twenty-two days. Their stately height and military bearing made all who saw them proud to have such aid. They came in as firm and light as if they had marched only a mile."—*History of the Siege of Delhi, by One who Served there.*

soon it will be seen how gallantly they proved the fidelity that was in them. Indeed, on the very day of their arrival the Guides went out, fresh as if they had slept a long sleep, and loitered through a cool morning, to give the Delhi mutineers a taste of their temper. The enemy were not prepared on the day after the battle to risk another great engagement; but, intent on not suffering us to rest, they sent out parties of Horse and Foot to attack our advanced position. The Guides went gallantly to the front. The sabres of their horsemen were crossed with those of the troopers of the Third Cavalry, but not long could the rebels stand the onslaught. The failure of the attack would have been complete if it had not cost us the life of one of our finest officers. Daly was unharmed, though struck by a spent shot, and his horse killed in the encounter; but his second in command, young Quintin Battye, who had charged at the head of the Guides' Cavalry, was carried mortally wounded from the field. The gallantry of his bearing throughout this fierce encounter had attracted the admiration of his chief; and Daly, when last he saw his lieutenant in action, had cried out with the irrepressible enthusiasm with which one brave man regards the bravery of another, "Gallant Battye! well done, brave Battye!" and soon afterwards a rebel came up within two yards of the English officer, and, after vainly endeavouring to bayonet him, discharged his piece into Battye's body. The deed was amply avenged. A Soubahdar of the Guide Corps cut the Sepoy down as he fired.* 1857. June.

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* Soubahdar Merban Singh. This gallant soldier was a Goorkah, "one of those sent down by Sir Henry Lawrence" to join the Guide Corps. He fell in action, some days afterwards, at the head of the first company, which he commanded. "The men," wrote Daly to John Lawrence, "speak of him with tears and sobs." He had two brothers also killed in action.

1857. June. Death of Quintin Battye.

And as the young hero lay dying, in grievous pain, on that night which was to be his last, a remembrance of the pleasant Argos of his school days mingling with the pride of the soldier and the great love of country which sustained our people, he said, with a smile on his handsome face, to the chaplain who was ministering to him, "Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori;" and so ended his brief and honourable career.*

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* See Chaplain's "Narrative of the Siege of Delhi."

CHAPTER III

GENERAL POLICY OF SIR JOHN LAWRENCE—THE RAISING OF LOCAL LEVIES—EVENTS AT PESHAWUR—DISARMING OF THE NATIVE REGIMENTS—PUNISHMENT OF DESERTERS—MUTINY OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH—EXPEDITION TO HOTE-MURDAN—MUTINY OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH—THE OUTBREAK AT JULLUNDHUR.

May, 1857.

Policy of Sir John Lawrence.

WHILST Daly's Guide Corps was making this splendid march, and the Punjab was contributing the first-fruits of its accumulated strength to the succour of the English Army at Delhi, events were ripening in the frontier province, and John Lawrence and his associates were laying fast hold of the crisis with a vigorous tenacity, as men knowing right well the sovereign importance of promptitude of action. The Chief Commissioner, in earnest council with Edwardes and Chamberlain, had clearly marked out the policy which was now to be pursued for the preservation of the Punjab. When intelligence of the events at the capital, and especially of the disarming of the Native regiments at Meean-Meer, reached him, he had been at first somewhat startled by the boldness of the conception, and perhaps inclined to question the wisdom of the achievement. For John Lawrence, with all his immense energy and resolution, was a man cautious and circumspect, who never acted upon impulse. If he thought at the beginning that this open movement

1857. May. against the Sepoys on the part of the Sirkar—this vehement declaration of want of confidence in men who had as yet, within his own circle of administration, done nothing disloyal—was hastily to proclaim a war that it was not desirable to precipitate, there was substantial reason for the doubt.* But he very soon felt full assurance that what had been done had been done wisely and well. And from that time, sternly recognising the fact that the crisis had come, that there was nothing to be postponed, or coqueted with, or smoothed down, he flung himself into the work before him, full-brained and strong-armed, and grappled with it as, perhaps, no other man could have done. Then he, in his turn, startled others by the boldness of his conceptions. There were men equally shrewd and courageous at Lahore, who learnt with alarm that the Chief Commissioner was enlisting Sikhs and Afghans into the service of the State. But this policy was based upon a sound estimate of the antagonism between the Poorbeah Sepoys from Hindostan and the Punjabee races, whether Sikhs or Mahomedans—a natural antagonism fostered and increased by the conduct of the former.† To replace these Hindostanees, among whom it every day became more apparent that mutiny was spreading like a pestilence, by the mixed races of the province and the frontier, might be to substitute a new danger for the old; but the one was certain, the other merely conjectural. And there was good reason to believe that so long as we were capable of asserting our strength, the military classes of the Punjab would array themselves on our side, if only for the sake of gain. Among the Sikhs, Delhi was both an offence and a temptation. Old prophecies had foretold that the Imperial City of the Mogul would some day be given up to the plunder of the Khalsa. And it was not to be doubted that the destruction of the Hindostanee Army of the Company would tend, sooner or later, to assist them to recover the ascendancy they had lost. Sir John Lawrence saw this clearly enough; but he had to deal with an immediate necessity, and he had no need at such a time to take thought of the Future. So he asked the consent of the Governor-General to the raising of local levies, and this, sought and granted on a small scale, soon expanded into larger proportions, and Sir John Lawrence held in his hand an open commission to act according to his own judgment and discretion.*

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* See the following extract from a private letter addressed by Lawrence to Edwardes, in which the position of affairs is most accurately stated in a few words: "The misfortune of the present state of affairs is this,—Each step we take for our own security is a blow against the Regular Sepoy. He feels this, and on his side takes a further step, and so we go on, until we disband or destroy them, or they mutiny and kill their officers."

† On the parts of the Sikhs and Punjabees there happily existed a considerable degree of antipathy, if not downright enmity, towards the Sepoys of the Native Corps of the Line. The latter had rendered themselves insufferable by assuming airs of superiority, and regarding the former with disdain, as being themselves more warlike and better soldiers. "We mar-ed (beat) Caubul, we mar-ed the Punjab," was the every-day boast of the Poorbeah Sepoy to the Sikh, whom he further stigmatised as a man of low caste. The bad feeling between the two races was still further fostered by the cold shoulder usually turned by the Poorbeahs to the Sikhs and Punjabees, whom they could not openly prevent enlisting into regiments of the Line."

1857. May.

This policy met with general favour among the chief political officers in the Province, and there were few who did not press for permission to recruit in their own districts. But it was soon apparent that there was in some parts, especially on the frontier, overmuch of hesitation, resulting from want of confidence in our strength. Meanwhile other precau-

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* I ought not to omit to state that, as many Sikhs had enlisted into the Sepoy regiments, an order went out to excerpt these men from the Hindostanee corps and form them into separate battalions.

1857. May. tionary measures were being pressed forward with that promptitude and energy which always distinguished such operations in the Punjab. The Police was strengthened. The utmost vigilance was enforced upon them. The different passages of the Punjab Rivers—the fords and ferries—were watched and guarded; and every effort was to be made to intercept those emissaries of evil who, in the guise of wandering fakeers or other religious mendicants, were sowing the seeds of sedition broadcast over the country.* Then, again, great endeavours were made —and with wonderful success—to save the Government Treasure, the loss of which was not to be calculated by the number of rupees to be struck off our cash-balances. It was emphatically the sinews of war to the enemy. Wherever it was held, under Native guards, at outlying stations, it was removed to places of security and stored under the protection of European soldiers. And at the same time an order went forth—merciful in the end, but terrible in the hour of our need—to punish all offenders against the State with a deterring severity, which would strike a great fear into the hearts of the people. "There was no room then for mercy," it was said; "the public safety was a paramount consideration." The ordinary processes of the law were set aside, and authority was given to any two civil officers to erect themselves into a special commission to try criminals, and to execute upon them, when needed, the sentence of death. At the same time, seeing that it was better to remove the means of offence than to punish its commission, he tried to clear the province of all that mass of disaffected non-military humanity from Hindostan,* which was either hanging on to the skirts of the Poorbeah Army, or had followed the Feringhees in the hour of success, moved by the great lust of gain to worship what they now reviled. And all these measures for the internal security of the province seemed to John Lawrence the more necessary, as he was straining every nerve to send down troops to Delhi, and thus was weakening his own defensive powers. For this reason, too, it seemed to him that we should act vigorously, and at once, against our declared enemies, taking the initiative whenever opportunity presented itself, and establishing a reputation for that confidence in our own resources, the belief in which by our adversaries is always a tower of strength. And already events were hurrying on to this desired point. One great opportunity was close at hand, and others were pressing on tumultuously behind.

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* I have been told that the picture in the first volume of this History, of the wandering emissaries of sedition, who, in one disguise or another, traversed the country, was purely an effort of my imagination. As this opinion has been made public through an influential channel, I may note that the statement in the text is from Sir John Lawrence's Official Report, laid before Parliament.

Events at Peshawur.

On the 21st of May, Colonel Edwardes returned to Peshawur.† Little sunshine greeted him there. His colleagues, Cotton and Nicholson, had no cheerful intelligence to offer him. A great cloud was over

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* "The traitorous symptoms evinced and the intrigues set on foot by the non-military Hindostanees in the Punjab territories, rendered it necessary to remove large numbers of them. These people were employed to a considerable extent among the police and other subordinate civil establishments; and as camp-followers they swarmed in every cantonment, and in the adjacent cities. Most of the lower class of employés were discharged, and numbers of camp-followers deported out of the province."—*Sir John Lawrence's Official Report.*

† The regular Hindostanee regiments at Peshawur consisted of the Fifth Cavalry and the Twenty-first, Twenty-fourth, Twenty-seventh, and Fifty-first Infantry regiments.

1857. May. the place. The Sepoy regiments had shown unmistakable signs of that feverishness which presages revolt. Cotton had divided his Hindostanee troops in such a manner as to render joint action more difficult; and he had placed Europeans, with guns, in their immediate vicinity, to be prepared for a sudden rising. From many parts of the country tidings of fresh mutinies had come in, and there was a general belief that the whole Native army was rotten to the core. Intercepted letters showed that the excitement was not confined to those whose names were written on the muster-rolls of our regiments.* Nicholson, who, with his wonted energy, had been pushing forward the work of raising local levies, had found an uneasy feeling among the chiefs of the principal tribes, and a general unwillingness to enlist into the service of a Government which seemed to be in a state of decrepitude, if not of decay. "Men remembered Caubul," wrote Edwardes at a later period. "Not one hundred could be found to join such a desperate cause." It was clear, therefore, both to him and to Nicholson that it was necessary to sweep away the doubts and uncertainties which were keeping up this dangerous state of unrest, and to assert, vigorously and undeniably, the power of the English on the frontier.

May 21. On the night of the 21st they had gone to rest in their clothes beneath the same roof, both assured that a few more hours would ripen their plans, when an express arrived informing them that the companies of the Fifty-fifth had mutinied at Nowshera, some

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* "Thaneysur Brahmins and Patna Mahomedans, Hindostanee fanatics in the Swat Valley and turbulent outlaws in Gitanah, were calling upon the Sepoys to declare themselves. . . . . The whole disclosed such a picture of fanatic zeal and base treachery as made the very name of a Poorbeah Sepoy suspected and loathed."—*Cave-Browne.*

1857. May 21—22.

twenty-four miles distant from Peshawur, and that there was no reliance to be placed on the Tenth Regiment of Irregular Cavalry at the same place. The former regiment had been brigaded at Meerut and other stations with the Third Cavalry, and was regarded as a fugleman corps, whose every movement would be strictly followed by the regiments in the Punjab. It needed not any long-sustained conversation between Edwardes and Nicholson for both to arrive at the conclusion that the Native troops at Peshawur should be at once disarmed. So the Commissioner and Deputy-Commissioner of Peshawur went straightway to the Quarters of the Brigadier, and woke him up in the dead of the night. Starting from his sleep, Cotton saw beside him his two political associates, and, wondering what had brought them to his bed-side, prepared himself to listen. He was not a man in any emergency to be flustered, and he soon took in with a cool brain the whole state of the case. It would be necessary to send European troops from Peshawur to coerce the refractory regiment at Nowshera and Hote-Murdan, and the white troops at Cotton's disposal, already weakened by the requirements of the Movable Column and by summer sickness, could little afford a further draft from them, whilst the Hindostanee regiments were in armed force in the Cantonment. Moreover, it was plain that the tribes on the Frontier were eagerly watching events, and that the excitement was every day increasing. But there were two aspects in which this might be regarded, for thus to strip the Frontier of a large part of its defenders—to reduce the available force at the disposal of the British Government to a handful of European troops—might be to encourage the Afghans to stream through the Khybur

1857. May 22. Pass in an irresistible spasm of energy for the recovery of Peshawur. The risk of action was great; the risk of quiescence seemed also to be great. But to those three brave men, in midnight council assembled, it appeared that the bolder would be the better course; and so it was resolved that they should be the first to strike, and that four of the five Sepoy Regiments should be disarmed at break of day.* The responsibility of the blow would rest with Cotton. He did not hesitate to accept it.

Disarming of the Sepoy Regiments. There was no time to be lost. So he at once summoned the Commanding Officers of the Native Regiments to his Quarters. Day broke before they were assembled. There, in the presence of Edwardes and Nicholson, Cotton told them what he had determined to do, and ordered them to parade their regiments with all possible despatch. Then there arose a storm of remonstrance. Protesting their entire confidence in the fidelity of their men, these Sepoy Commandants clamoured vehemently against the threatened disgrace of their regiments; and one declared his conviction that his corps would never submit to lay down its arms, but would rise against the order and resolutely attack the guns.† Cotton listened attentively to all that was said, but the discussion proceeded after argument had been exhausted, and, after a while, Edwardes, thinking that time and words were being wasted, broke in with an emphatic sentence, to the effect "that the matter rested entirely with Brigadier Cotton." On this Cotton at once exclaimed: "Then the troops as originally determined will be disarmed." This silenced all further remonstrance. Not another word was said by way of argument. The regimental commandants received their instructions and went forth to do the bidding of their chief. 1857. May 22.

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* The Twenty-first Sepoy Regiment was exempted from the operation of the disarming order. It was the Senior Regiment in the cantonment, and as such, according to military etiquette and usage, the other battalions looked to it for an example. It had certainly not given a signal for insurrection, and whatever may have been the feelings with which it regarded the supremacy of the English, it had shown no active symptoms of disaffection. It was thought advisable, therefore, to spare it, the more especially as it was held to be "indispensable to keep one Native Infantry corps to carry on the duties of the station."

† "It was impossible not to sympathise with the soldierly feelings of Colonel Harrington and Major Shakespeare; but when Colonel Plumbe has implicit confidence in the Twenty-seventh Native Infantry to be unshaken by events in Hindostan, and had nothing to recommend but conciliation, whilst the Colonel of the Fifty-first, on the other hand, predicted that his men would attack the guns if called on to give up their muskets, hesitation was at an end."—*Edwardes's Report.*

It has been stated that the Peshawur Force had been wisely cut in two, as a precautionary measure, by Brigadier Cotton. It was now arranged that Edwardes should accompany Cotton to the right wing, whilst Nicholson went to the left with Colonel Galloway of the Seventieth Queen's, who stood next in seniority.* With the former were Her Majesty's Eighty-seventh Fusiliers, with the latter the Seventieth, both with detachments of Artillery to support them. It was a moment of intense anxiety. The Sepoy Commandants were parading their men, and the Queen's Regiments were lying in wait to attack them on the first sign of resistance. The suddenness of the movement took the Sepoys aback; they laid down their arms to the bidding of their own officers. And as the piles grew and grew, under the mournful process of humiliating surrender, a feeling of profound grief and shame took possession of their officers, and it is recorded that some of them cast their own swords and spurs upon the heaps of abandoned musketry and sabres in token of the strength of their

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* Brigadier Cotton at this time commanded generally the Frontier Force, whilst Colonel Galloway was Brigadier Commanding the Station.

1857. May 22. sympathy with the Sepoys, and their detestation of the authority which had degraded them.*

The arms surrendered, Brigadier Cotton addressed the regiments, praising them for the readiness with which they had obeyed orders; and they went to their lines. Thus was the work done well and thoroughly—and without the shedding of a drop of blood. The effect upon the minds of the people was magical. They believed that we were strong because we were daring. The old aphorism, that "nothing succeeds like success," was here triumphantly verified. The tribes, who had held aloof whilst danger threatened us, and the issue was doubtful, now pressed forward eagerly to do homage to the audacity of the English. Without another halt of doubt, or tremour of hesitation, they came forward with their offers of service. "As we rode down to the disarming," said Herbert Edwardes, "a very few chiefs and yeomen of the country attended us, and I remember, judging from their faces, that they came to see which way the tide would turn. As we rode back friends were as thick as summer flies, and levies began from that moment to come in." Good reason, indeed, had Sir John Lawrence to write to the Peshawur Commissioner, with hearty commendation, saying, "I look on the disarming of the four corps at Peshawur as a master-stroke—one which will do much good to keep the peace throughout the Punjab. Commandants of Corps are under a delusion, and

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* Colonel Edwardes's Official Report. "As the muskets and sabres of the once honoured corps were hurried unceremoniously into carts, it was said that here and there the spurs and swords of English officers fell sympathisingly upon the pile." General Cotton says that the conduct of some of the Sepoy officers then, and afterwards, was of a highly insubordinate character, and that serious consequences to them would have ensued, "had it been prudent to exhibit such a division in the European element in the eyes of the Native troops and the people of the country."

1857.
May.

whilst in this state their opinions are of little value. . . . We are doing well in every district—Becher famously."*

Punishment of Deserters.

But although the Native regiments at Peshawur had been disarmed, they had not been rendered altogether innocuous. Arms on that frontier, though for the most part of a ruder kind than our own, were abundant, and our disciplined Sepoys, fraternising with the border tribes, might have returned to do us grievous injury.† It was, perhaps, too much to expect that the entire body of Sepoys would remain quietly in their Lines; for if the active principle of rebellion were within them, they would be eager to cross the frontier, and if they were under the pressure of a great panic, confused and bewildered by the blow which had fallen upon them, they would surely believe that it was the design of the English to destroy the soldiers whom they had disarmed. It was scarcely, therefore, to be hoped that at such a time there would be no desertions. But it was necessary at once to arrest these natural impulses to leave the Lines.‡ It was not a time for tenderness—for mercy—even for justice. A stern example was to be made of the first offenders. So the Police were put upon their track, and the tribes were encouraged to arrest the fugitives. Many were brought back, in the firm grip of their supposed friends and confederates—some of them after falling among thieves and being despoiled of all they possessed.

Those were the early days of our great trouble, and Regulation and Routine were still paramount amongst us. The technicalities of the Judge-Advocate had

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* Major John Becher of the Engineers, Deputy-Commissioner of the Hazareh Division of the Punjab.

† MS. Correspondence.

‡ The desertions were principally from the Fifty-first Regiment.

1857. May 28. not been dispensed with, and the trial of these deserters, therefore, was conducted with all due ceremony and formality.* Colonel Galloway was President of the Court Martial assembled by order of General Reed, and the first result was that the Soubahdar Major of the Fifty-first, found guilty of desertion, was sentenced to death; whilst a Havildar and a Sepoy were condemned to short terms of imprisonment. The leniency of these latter sentences provoked Cotton and Edwardes; but the public execution of a high Native officer might still have a good deterring effect. So on the evening of the 28th of May, what was called, in the demi-official language of the time, "an useful timber frame-work" was erected on the parade-ground, and a general parade was ordered for the following morning. "The Soubahdar Major of the Fifty-first was hanged this morning," wrote Edwardes to Nicholson on the 29th, "in presence of all the troops, who behaved well. I occupied the road in rear of Cantonments with Horse and Foot levies, in case the Fifty-first should refuse to attend the Parade, as some people expected, in which case General Cotton would have put them to the bayonet."† But soon the "useful timber frame-work" thus called into requisition for the first time at Peshawur was put to larger uses; until the process of suspension became tedious, and convicted offenders were blown from the guns.

Destruction of the Fifty-Fifth. In the meanwhile retribution was overtaking the Fifty-fifth Regiment at Murdan. "An hour hence," wrote Edwardes on the day after the disarming at Peshawur, "a small force of three hundred European Infantry, about two hundred and fifty Cavalry (Native

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* The Judge-Advocate said that drum-head courts-martial were "obsolete." It was not long before they were revivified into institutions of the present.

† MS. Correspondence.

Irregulars), and eight guns, six of which are howitzers, will march from this cantonment to the ferry at Dobundee, and thence proceed to-morrow night in one long march to the Fort of Murdan, for the purpose of disarming the Fifty-fifth Native Infantry, which is said to be in a state of mutiny." The expedition was commanded by Colonel Chute of the Seventieth Queen's,* and with it, as political officer, went Colonel John Nicholson, ever eager to be in the thick of the action. It has been already related that the Fifty-fifth had been ordered to relieve the Guide Corps at Hote Murdan. It had proceeded thither from Nowshera, leaving two companies at the old station under Captain Cameron. There the Queen's Twenty-seventh (Enniskillens) had been stationed with Brougham's battery; but the former had been ordered to Rawul-Pindee, and the latter to Peshawur. And now, with the exception of a little handful of Europeans, who had been placed in charge of the sick and the women and children of the old European garrison, the place was left to the mercy of mutinous Native troops.† The situation was one of extreme danger. But it was manfully confronted by Lieutenant Davies of the Enniskillens, who, having placed his helpless charge in a convenient barrack, drew up his little body of staunch Englishmen, fully accoutred and ready for action, and prepared to meet his assailants. These signs of resistance were too much for the mutineers. Having fired a few random shots from a distance, they made off towards the river, intending to cross by the bridge of boats, and to join their comrades in 1857. May.

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* Brigadier Cotton wished himself to go in command, but Edwardes persuaded him to remain at Peshawur, where his services were more needed.

† It should be stated that there was a detachment of the regiment posted on the Attock to guard the ferry at Khyrabad. These men were the first to mutiny.

1857. May 22—24. Hote-Murdan. But Taylor, of the Engineers, with characteristic readiness of resource, broke the bridge, by drawing out the boats in mid-channel, and only a few men made the passage of the river and joined their head-quarters in the course of the night. The rest returned to their Lines, and for a while remained sullen and inactive. But a summons came to them to march to Murdan, and on the night of the 22nd they went thither peaceably under Cameron's command.

They went to swell the tide of treason. There was no doubt of the treachery of the main body of the regiment, although with lip-loyalty it was still deceiving its officers, after the old fashion; and its Colonel, Henry Spottiswoode, who is described as "a devoted soldier, who lived for his regiment," protested that he had "implicit confidence" in his men, and implored Cotton not to act against them. So strong, indeed, was his trust, that even the warnings of some men of his own corps could not shake it. Two hundred Sikhs had been enlisted into the regiment since it had been stationed in the Punjab, and these men now offered, if separated from the rest, to fight the whole of the Hindostanee Sepoys. But Spottiswoode shook his head and declined the offer. He had faith in his children to the last. He would "stake his life on their staunchness;" and he did. On the night of the 24th, the advance of the force from Peshawur was suspected, if not known, by the Sepoys, and the Native officers went to the Colonel for an explanation. Spottiswoode knew the truth of the report but too well. He could answer nothing of an assuring kind, and the deputies went unsatisfied from his presence. Then his heart sunk within him. It was all over. The mutual confidence on which he

1857. May 25.

had relied so much was gone for ever. He could not bear the thought of the future, so left alone in his room he blew out his brains.*

As day was breaking on the 25th, Chute's column, having been strengthened by a body of Punjab Infantry under Major Vaughan, came in sight of the Fort of Hote-Murdan. No sooner was their advance discerned from the walls than the Fifty-fifth rose in a body and rushed forth tumultuously, turning their faces towards the hills of Swat. Now that their Colonel was gone, they felt that there was no hope for them. So they went, taking with them their arms, their regimental colours, all the treasure they could seize, and all the ammunition that they could carry with them. Chute sent on a detachment of all arms of his little force, whilst he occupied the fort with the remainder;† but the mutineers had a long start, and the country was such that our guns could not be brought within range of the fugitives. These things were in their favour. But there was one thing terribly against them. Nicholson was there. His foot in the stirrup, his sword by his side, and a few trusty horsemen behind him, all his old martial instincts, of which civil employment had long denied the gratification, grew strong within him again, and he swept down upon the flying Sepoys with a grand swoop, which nothing could escape or resist. It was said afterwards that the tramp of his war-horse was heard miles off. "Spottiswoode's light-hearted boys,"

Nicholson in pursuit.

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* See an interesting note in Mr. Cave-Browne's book, vol. i., p. 170. Colonel Spottiswoode had served chiefly with the Twenty-first, and had been only for a few months in command of the Fifty-fifth.

† It should be stated that the officers of the Fifty-fifth, with about one hundred and twenty men, came out of the Fort and joined Chute's force. It was doubted whether they were more faithful than the rest. Colonel Edwardes (Official Report) says that they were brought over by the threats and persuasions of their officers.

1857. May 24—26.

he wrote to Edwardes on the 24th, "swear that they will die fighting. *Nous allons voir.*" And a day or two later he wrote to the same beloved correspondent saying, "The Fifty-fifth fought determinately, as men, who have no chance of escape but by their own exertions, always do." But the pursuing party killed about a hundred and twenty of the mutineers, captured about a hundred and fifty, with the regimental colours, and more than two hundred stands of arms.* The rest took refuge in the Loond-khoor hills. And many of those who fell on that day fell under Nicholson's own strong arm. Of those under him, none fought so well as his own Mounted Police. The men of the Irregular Cavalry only "pretended to act."† "I did not get home till 7 P.M. yesterday," he wrote to Edwardes on the 26th of May, "having been just twenty hours in the saddle, and in the sun the whole day. So you may fancy I was dead beat, and my horse too. He carried me over seventy miles."

If there had been any doubt before as to the man of men—the one, of all others, strong in action and swift in pursuit, by whom desperate work, such as Edwardes had spoken of in Calcutta, was to be done best, the question was now settled. All men saw in this the first of Nicholson's great exploits in the mutiny-war, the forerunner of many others of the same stamp. It was a fine thing at that time—nothing finer in the whole history of the War—to mark the enthusiasm with which men, all earnest in the great work before them, rejoiced in the successes of their brethren, and sent forth, one to another, pleasant pæans of encouragement. The chief officers of the Punjab were bound together not merely by the excitement of a common object; the bonds of a common affection were equally strong within them, and each was eager to express his admiration of the good deeds of another. There may have been good fellowship in other provinces, but in none was there such fellowship as this. Men of the stamp of Edwardes and Nicholson, Becher and Lake, James and M'Pherson—all having equal zeal for the public, but not all enjoying equal opportunities, or, perhaps, possessing equal powers, free from all jealousies, all rivalries—were strong in mutual admiration, and were as proud of the exploits of a comrade as of their own. This great raid of John Nicholson stirred the hearts of all men to their depth. Edwardes in letter after letter, in brief but emphatic sentences, had sent him those fine, frank, genial words of hearty commendation, which no man ever uttered more becomingly or more acceptably, and afterwards recorded officially that his friend "with a handful of horsemen hurled himself like a thunderbolt on the route of a thousand mutineers." And John Becher, all a-glow with admiration of the two Peshawur Commissioners, wrote to Edwardes, saying, "I rejoice to see you thus riding on the whirlwind and controlling the storm, and glad amidst the thunder-clouds. Your letter sounds like a clarion-blast full of vigour and self-reliance; and I am proud to see you and Nicholson in this grand 1857. May.

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* Colonel Chute to Brigadier Cotton, Murdan, May 26.

† "There were some Irregulars, but they only pretended to act. Captain Law, who commanded a party of the Tenth Irregular Cavalry, got wounded in setting a vain example to his men, one of whom treacherously fired into the Fifth Punjab Infantry. The Fifth, under Major Vaughan, followed as close as infantry could do, and showed an admirable spirit throughout the day."—*Edwardes's Report.* Nicholson wrote that "the casualties in the Tenth Irregular Cavalry the other day were an excellent index of the state and value of the corps."—"These casualties were one European officer, wounded whilst trying to get his men to advance, one Sowar killed, not by the Fifty-fifth, but by Vaughan's men, into whom he treacherously fired."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. May. storm, masters at your work; right glad that Nicholson did not leave. There was work for his war-horse, and he is in his element—the first who has struck a death-blow. And we may be proud of John Lawrence as a master-spirit in these times."*

June 2. A terrible example was now to be made of the mutineers of the Fifty-fifth. A hundred and twenty Sepoy prisoners were in the hands of the British. They were all liable to the punishment of death. It was not to be doubted that the time had come when the severity of the hour would be the humanity of all time. But these rebels, though taken fighting against their masters, and known to have had murder in their hearts, had not shed the blood of their officers, and there were some amongst them who in the tumult of the hour had been carried away by the multitude without any guilty intent. The voice of mercy, therefore, was lifted up. "I must say a few words for some of the Fifty-fifth prisoners," wrote Nicholson to Edwardes. "The officers of that regiment all concur in stating that the Sikhs were on their side to the last. I would, therefore, temper stern justice with mercy, and spare the Sikhs and young recruits. Blow away all the rest by all means, but spare boys scarcely out of their childhood, and men who were really loyal and respectful up to the moment when they allowed themselves to be carried away in a panic by the mass." And Sir John Lawrence wrote also in the same strain to the Commissioner of Peshawur. "In respect to the mutineers of the Fifty-fifth, they

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* Nicholson himself was very anxious that too much credit should not be given to him for this exploit. It was stated in the public prints that he had commanded the expeditionary force from Peshawur, and that he had been twenty hours in pursuit of the enemy; and he requested that it might be explained with equal publicity that Colonel Chute commanded the force, and that he (Nicholson) had been twenty hours in the saddle, but not all that time in pursuit.

1857. June.

were taken fighting against us, and so far deserve little mercy. But, on full reflection, I would not put them all to death. I do not think that we should be justified in the eyes of the Almighty in doing so. A hundred and twenty men are a large number to put to death. Our object is to make an example to terrify others. I think this object would be effectually gained by destroying from a quarter to a third of them. I would select all those against whom anything bad can be shown—such as general bad character, turbulence, prominence in disaffection or in the fight, disrespectful demeanour to their officers during the few days before the 26th, and the like. If these did not make up the required number, I would then add to them the oldest soldiers. All these should be shot or blown away from guns, as may be most expedient. The rest I would divide into batches: some to be imprisoned ten years, some seven, some five, some three. I think that a sufficient example will then be made, and that these distinctions will do good, and not harm. The Sepoys will see that we punish to deter, and not for vengeance. Public sympathy will not be on the side of the sufferers. Otherwise, they will fight desperately to the last, as feeling certain that they must die."*

And in these opinions, equally politic and merciful, the military authorities concurred; indeed, there was at one time some talk of suffering those men of the Fifty-fifth, who had not actually committed themselves, to retain their arms, and even of rewarding the best of them. But subsequent investigation proved that the Hindostanees who had not left the Fort owed their immunity from actual crime rather to accident than to loyal design; so they were discharged without pay,

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* MS. Correspondence.

1857. June 10. and sent beyond the Indus, whilst the Sikhs, who had made gallant offer of service, were left with their arms in their hands, and drafted into other regiments.

Then came the stern work of retribution. On the 3rd of June, twelve deserters of the Fifty-first had been hanged; and now on the 10th, the parade-ground of the Eighty-seventh Queen's, on which the gallows had been permanently erected, witnessed another scene of execution still more ghastly in its aspect. The fugitives from Hote-Murdan had all been sentenced to death. A hundred and twenty criminals had been condemned to be blown away from our guns. But the recommendations of the Chief Commissioner had tempered the severity of the sentence, and only one-third of the number had been marked for execution. Forty prisoners were brought out manacled and miserable to that dreadful punishment parade. The whole garrison of Peshawur was drawn up, forming three sides of a square, to witness the consummation of the sentence. The fourth side was formed by a deadly array of guns. Thousands of outsiders had poured in from the surrounding country to be spectators of the tremendous ceremony—all curious, many doubtful, some perhaps malignantly eager for an outbreak, to be followed by the collapse of British ascendancy. The pieces of the Europeans were loaded. The officers, in addition to their regulation arms, had for the most part ready to their clutch what was now becoming an institution—the many-barreled revolver pistol. The issue was doubtful, and our people were prepared for the worst.

Under a salute from one of the batteries, the Brigadier-General appeared on parade. Having ridden along the fronts of the great human square, he ordered the sentence to be read. And this done,

1857. June 10.

the grim ceremony commenced. The forty selected malefactors were executed at the mouth of the guns.* No man lifted a hand to save them. The Native troops on parade bore themselves with steadiness, as under a great awe, and when orders went forth for the whole to march past in review order, armed and unarmed alike were obedient to the word of command. To our newly-raised levies and to the curious on-lookers from the country, the whole spectacle was a marvel and a mystery. It was a wonderful display of moral force, and it made a deep and abiding impression. There was this great virtue in it, that however unintelligible the process by which so great a result had been achieved, it was easy to understand the fact itself. The English had conquered, and were masters of the position. Perhaps some of the most sagacious and astute of the spectators of that morning's work said to each other, or to themselves, as they turned their faces homeward, that the English had conquered because they were not afraid. The strength, indeed, imparted to our cause by the disarming-parade of the 24th of May had been multiplied ten-fold by the punishment-parade of the 10th of June. And it is hard to say how many lives—the lives of men of all races—were saved by the seeming severity of this early execution.

Among the rude people of the border the audacity thus displayed by the English in the face of pressing danger excited boundless admiration. They had no longer any misgivings with respect to the superiority

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* It is a significant fact that neither Sir Herbert Edwardes, in his Official Peshawur Report, nor Sir Sydney Cotton in his published Narrative, says one word about this punishment-parade. And what these brave men, being eye-witnesses of the horror, shrunk from describing, I may well abstain from dwelling on in detail. There is no lack, however, of particulars, all ghastly and some grotesque, in the cotemporary letters before me.

1857. June 10. of a race that could do such great things, calmly and coolly, and with all the formality of an inspection-parade. The confidence in our power, which the disbandment of the Native regiments had done so much to revive, now struck deep root in the soil. Free offers of allegiance continued to come in from the tribes. Feeling now that the English were masters of the situation, their avarice was kindled, and every man who had a matchlock or a tulwar, or, better still, a horse to bring to the muster, came forward with his tender of service to the British officers at Peshawur. The difficulties and perplexities of the crisis could not obscure the humours of this strange recruiting. Herbert Edwardes, who was the life and soul of every movement at that time, has himself sketched its comic aspects with an almost Hogarthian fidelity of detail.* But this passed, whilst every week developed more strikingly its serious results. For, as the month of June advanced, and news came that the English had not retaken Delhi, and across the border went from mouth to mouth the rumour of the fiery crescent, there was increasing danger that Mussulman fanaticism might prevail over all else, and that a religious war once proclaimed, it would be impossible to control the great tide of Mahomedanism that would pour itself down from the North. If in that hour the English had been weak at Peshawur, they might have been overwhelmed. But much as those wild Moslems loved Mahomed, they loved money more, and when they saw that we were strong, they clung to us, as the wiser policy.

The end of the Fifty-fifth may be narrated here.

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* See the Peshawur Mutiny Report, especially paragraph 66, which will be found entire in the Appendix.

1857. June.

Even more deplorable than the fate of these men, thus suddenly brought face to face with ignominious death, was the doom impending over their comrades, who had escaped from Nicholson's pursuing horsemen across the border into Swat. There they found the country rent by intestine feuds; almost, indeed, in the throes of a revolution. The temporal and spiritual chiefs—the Padshah and the Akhoond—were at strife with one another. The mutineers took themselves and their arms to the former, but he had no money to pay them, and our sleek, well-fed Hindostanees soon discovered that they had committed a grievous blunder. In a little while the body of their leader—the self-made shattered corpse of a white-bearded Soubahdar—was floating down the river under the walls of Nowshera, and his followers, disappointed and destitute, were turning their faces towards the country of the Rajah of Cashmere, sick of Mussulman fanaticism, and hoping to excite sympathy and obtain service under a Rajpoot government. These poor deluded Hindoos, who had abandoned pay, pension, peace, everything that was dear to them, under a blind besetting belief in the bigotry of their Christian masters, now found themselves breast-high in the bitter waters of Mahomedan persecution.* They had escaped the chimera of a greased cartridge to be despoiled of their sacred threads and circumcised. They had fled from a random rumour to confront a revolting reality. And now they were fain to go skulking along the border, taking their gaunt bodies and tattered garments to any place of refuge open to them, seeking rest, but finding none; for as they huddled

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* Mr. Cave-Browne says that "many a sleek Brahmin was made a compulsory Mahomedan, doomed to servile offices in their musjids; others were sold for slaves. Rumour has it that one fat old Soubahdar was sold for four annas (sixpence)."

1857. June. along the Hazareh border, stumbling through rocky defiles, more inhospitable than their Mahomedan persecutors, John Becher raised the friendly clans to hunt them out like vermin. Then their misery was at its height. Hungry and naked and footsore, it was death to them to move, it was death to them to remain still. Another venerable Soubahdar set an example of suicide to his followers by shooting himself, declaring that it was better to die at once than to perish slowly by starvation. Becher himself has told with rare force of language how first one detachment then another was assisted by friendly Kohistanees and others, whose services he had most sagaciously enlisted, until the whole were either destroyed or brought prisoners into our Camp.* Then came the last scene of all, in which the Gibbet and the Guns were the chief actors. On the very outskirts of civilisation, where only a few Englishmen were gathered together, the last of "Spottiswoode's light-hearted fellows" paid the penalty of their folly

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* See Major Becher's published report—Punjab Mutiny Papers. In a private letter to Edwardes (July 1) he gives a graphic description of the flight of the Sepoys and the raising of the border clans. "After making a march," he said, "in the direction of Khagan, they turned back and went by the more difficult road through the Kohistan, along the Indus to Chilass, and with faces towards Ghiljet, or some other portion of Cashmere, as to the promised land of safety. One of their officers shot himself at the prospect; one or two have died already; several are very ill. They have no carriage and are rather hungry. . . . . The road is very difficult even for men of the country. They have no shelter, and I believe that very few can escape; besides which, the Maharajah Gholab Singh has moved a regiment to his Ghiljet frontier, and swears he will polish off every man he meets. He has also warned the Goojurs and people of the country to pay them off. I have had several messengers who have seen them. They are mostly Hindoos. Looking naked as they do, the women and children throw stones at them and cry, 'Out on you, black Kaffirs without decency!' And they were shocked by the habits which they witnessed in the early morning. The people of Pucklee and Hazara have come forth like spirits at my bidding. I have been deluged with clansmen, and our camp is very picturesque. . . . I have received satisfactory assurances from all our border chiefs. If the Syuds of Khagan had not, like good men and true, manned their front, I think the Sepoys would have tried an easier route; but then again they would have found men of Gholab Singh's ready at Mozufferabad." *MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June.

or their crime. One party after another of the fugitives was brought in, tried by a military court and sentenced to death; and they were hung up, or blown away, on some commanding ground, to be a warning and a terror to others. Brave and sullen they went to their doom, asking only to die like soldiers at the cannon's mouth, not as dogs in the noose of the gibbet. Little less than two hundred men were executed at that time in the Hazareh country. "Thus, hunted down to the last like wild beasts, was consummated the miserable fate of the Fifty-fifth regiment, and thus they afforded a salutary example to other mutinous regiments, by proving the far reach of our power, and that there was no refuge even beyond our border."* If any had not been thus hunted out, their fate was perhaps worse than that of the executed malefactors, for they were sold into slavery, and compelled to apostatise for their lives.

Alarms on the Frontier.

Elsewhere, however, were ominous symptoms upon the frontier. Nicholson, since his great raid against the fugitives of the Fifty-fifth, had been still in the field, and he had frequently written to Edwardes that the Mussulman chiefs on the border were eagerly watching the progress of events, and encouraging the rebellion of our Native soldiery; who, at the same time, had been making overtures to them. There was, too, a notorious outlaw, named Ajoon Khan, who was believed to be intriguing with our troops at Abazye, a fortress on the banks of the Swat River, and Nicholson was eager to make a swoop upon him.†

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* Major Becher's Report.

† This uneasy feeling on the frontier had been of long standing. See the following significant passage in Mr. Forsyth's Mutiny Report: "Of the causes which led to this

1857. May 26. "The game is becoming nicer and more complicated," he had written on the 26th of May from Murdan, "Ajoon Khan has come down to Prangar, and it is generally believed that he has done so at the instigation of our troops there. This does not seem improbable. There is no doubt that for some time past emissaries (mostly Moollahs) from the Hills had been going backwards and forwards between the Fifty-fifth Native Infantry here and certain parties in their own country." Four days May 30. afterwards, he wrote from Omurzye, saying: "We are just starting for Abazye. I will let you know this evening whether I recommend the disarming of the Sixty-fourth Native Infantry. I am strongly inclined to believe that we should not merely disarm but disband that corps, and the Tenth Irregular Cavalry. There is no doubt that they have both been in communication with the Akhoond of Swat. . . . . If the disarming of both or either corps be determined upon, we can do it very well from here, without troubling the Peshawur troops. I believe we did not pitch into the Fifty-fifth one day too soon. That corps and the Sixty-fourth were all planning to go over to the Akhoond together. I have got a man who taunted my police on the line of march with siding with infidels in a religious war. May I hang him?"

rebellion it is not for me to speak, but I cannot refrain from recording one fact, which was not without significance. In August, 1856, a letter from the Akhoond of Swat, addressed to Futteh Khan, of Pindee Gheb, was brought to me at Rawul-Pindee. Among much other news, the writer stated that the Mahomedans of Lucknow had written to Dost Mahomed, informing him that Oude had been taken by the British, and that as they supposed that Hyderabad would follow, there would soon be no stronghold of Islam left in Hindostan, and unless some effort were made the cause of true believers would be lost. In the event of the Mahomedans of Oude entering on any plan, they wished to know what aid they might expect from the Dost. The sagacious reply to this observation was stated by the writer to be, 'What will be remains to be seen.'"

On the following day Nicholson wrote from Abazye, saying: "We arrived here all right yesterday, and found the Sixty-fourth looking very villainous, but of course perfectly quiet. They have been talking very disloyally both to the Ghilzyes" (men of the Khelat-i-Ghilzye Regiment) "and people of the country, and the former have ceased to associate with them. The latter have been rather hoping for a row, in the midst of which they may escape paying revenue." What he saw was quite enough to convince him that it would be well to do the work at once. Approval had come from Cotton, from Edwardes, and from Lawrence. So a detachment of Europeans, with some Punjabee details and some guns of Brougham's battery, the whole under that officer, were sent to disarm the companies at Shubkudder, and afterwards those at Michnee, whilst the force at Abazye was being dealt with by other components of Chute's column. The teeth of the Sixty-fourth were drawn without difficulty. But the annihilation of the Tenth Irregular Cavalry was reserved for another day. Nicholson recommended that no action should be taken against the Irregulars until tidings of the fall of Delhi should have reached the Punjab. He little thought how remote was this event at the beginning of June; that long months were yet to wear away in unsuccessful efforts to accomplish the great object for which the Punjab was pouring out so much of its military strength. And others were of the same sanguine temper all over the Province—fortunately, for this faith, strong though delusive, sustained them, and they worked with better heart and greater vigour for holding fast to the lie. 1857. June.

There was now no further service for Chute's column to perform. So it marched back to Peshawur,

1857. June 10. and Nicholson rode on in advance of it, to resume his political duties. On the 10th of June, Edwardes welcomed his friend and fellow-workman with warm congratulations on his success. "Nicholson came in from Abazye this morning," he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, "looking rather the worse for exposure; and we have been going over the batta question, &c., with the General, and have decided to say nothing about it till Delhi falls, and then to disarm the Tenth Irregular Cavalry, and exempt from the abolition of batta the Twenty-first Native Infantry, the Khelat-i-Ghilzye Regiment, and the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Irregular Cavalry, if they keep quiet." And in the same letter he wrote to the Chief Commissioner, saying, "What a terrible job is the going off of those three regiments from Jullundhur and Phillour towards Delhi!" It was a source of sore distress and dire aggravation to Edwardes and Nicholson that, whilst they had been doing so much for the defence of the province and the maintenance of the honour of the nation, others were throwing away every chance that came in their way, and by their weakness and indecision suffering the enemy to escape.

Mutiny at Jullundhur. For in other parts of the province there was not always that glorious audacity which secures success by never doubting its attainment. In the first week of June, the Sepoy regiments at Jullundhur, whom, as we have already seen, Brigadier Johnstone had not disarmed in May, were swelling with sedition and ripe for revolt. Major Edward Lake, who, in early youth, had shared with Herbert Edwardes the distinction of striking the first blow at the Mooltanee insurgents of '49, was Commissioner of the Jullundhur division. He had been absent on circuit when the events occurred which have been detailed in a previous chapter,* but before the end of the month he had returned to Head-Quarters, had closely observed the temper of the Sepoys, and had been convinced that they were only waiting an opportunity to break into open rebellion. He strongly counselled, therefore, the disarming of the regiments. But there was no Cotton at Jullundhur. The Sepoy commandants shook their heads after their wonted fashion; and the Brigadier, tossed hither and thither by wild conflicts of doubt, at last subsided into inaction. Events were left to develope themselves, and they did so with all possible advantage to the mutineers. On the night of the 7th of June, the Native battalions—two regiments of Foot and one of Horse—inaugurated a general rising by setting fire to the house of the Colonel of the Queen's regiment. In a little while the Lines were all astir with the sights and sounds of open mutiny; and the officers were making their way to the parade-grounds, whilst women and children, in wild excitement, were hurrying to the appointed place of refuge. It is not easy to describe the uproar and confusion which made the midnight hideous, nor to explain the reason why, in the presence of an European regiment and a troop of European Artillery, the insurgents were allowed to run riot in unrestrained revolt. The incidents of the rising were of the common type. They were not distinguished by any peculiar atrocities. It seems that there was a general understanding among the Sepoys that on a given day they should set their faces towards Delhi. As a body, they did not lust for the blood of

1857. June.

June 7.

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* *Ante*, pp. 427-28.

1857. June 7. their officers; but in the excitement of the moment, murderous blows were dealt. Adjutant Bagshawe, of the Thirty-sixth Regiment—a gallant officer and a good man—was mortally wounded whilst endeavouring to rally a party of his Sepoys. The death-blow did not come from one of his own men, but from a trooper who "rode up and shot him." Other officers were wounded in the confusion of the hour; houses were burnt, and property was destroyed. But there were instances of fidelity and attachment on the part of the Sepoys; men came forward staunchly and devotedly to save the lives of their officers. And altogether there were the usual contradictions and anomalies, which, more or less all over the country, seemed to indicate the general half-heartedness of the Sepoy revolt.

It was obviously the intention of the Jullundhur Brigade to pick up the long-wavering regiment at Phillour, and then for the whole to march on to Delhi.* A trooper of the Cavalry galloped forward in advance of the rebel force to give the Third the earliest tidings of their approach. The conduct of the last-named corps appears to be inscrutable, except upon the hypothesis of a long-cherished design, and that patient, sturdy resistance of all immediate temptations, which seems in many instances to have distinguished the behaviour of men waiting for an appointed day and a given signal. The Third, that might have done us such grievous injury when the siege-train was in its grasp, now that the time had come, cast in its lot with the Jullundhur mutineers, and swept on towards the city of the King. It is one of the worst disgraces of the war that these Jullundhur regiments were ever suffered to reach Phillour. There was no lack of men eager to pursue the mutineers; but the one word from the one responsible authority was not spoken until all orders might as well have been given to the winds. The mutineers had done their work and marched out of cantonments by one o'clock in the morning, and not until seven was the word given for the advance of the pursuing column. The extreme consideration of Brigadier Johnstone for his European troops was such that he waited until the fierce June sun had risen—waited until the commissariat was not ready—waited until the enemy had escaped.* The pursuers marched out and marched back again, never having seen the enemy at all. 1857. June 8.

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* I find the following in the Punjab Mutiny Papers. It seems to leave little doubt with respect to the foregone design: "These intentions were by chance divulged by a wounded Havildar of the Third Native Infantry to an officer, who found him concealed at Homayoon's tomb, after the capture of Delhi. This information was given without any attempt at palliation or reserve. . . . . It was from the lips of a man who knew his end was near, and conveyed the impression of truth to its hearer; it is, moreover, borne out by known facts and circumstances. It was, strictly, that all the troops in the Jullunder Doab had agreed to rise simultaneously; a detachment from Jullunder was to go over to Hooshiarpore, to fetch away the Thirty-third Native Infantry, failing which the Thirty-third were to remain (and they did so); then their arrival at Phillour was to be the signal for the Third to join, when all were to proceed to Delhi, facing the river as best they could."—*Report of Mr. Ricketts.*

The history of the so-called pursuit appears to be this. In the course of the day, there being a vague impression that Phillour might be in danger, Olpherts, with two of his guns, carrying a small party

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* I give this on the authority of Brigadier Johnstone, who himself says: "The pursuit of the mutineers commenced before seven o'clock of the morning following the night of the outbreak. It could not have been undertaken earlier. The direction taken by the rebels was not ascertained till half-past three o'clock. Preparations had to be made in obtaining carriage for the infantry, providing rations, &c., perfecting the equipment for guns, horses, &c., and these, after the utmost despatch of officers, as ready and zealous as men could be, were found impossible to be completed at an earlier hour. The complaint of one writer I understand is, that the haste of departure in pursuit was so great, that the Infantry had to march without rations and other comforts, which is true," &c. &c.—*Letter to Lahore Chronicle.*

1857. June 8.

of the Eighth Queen's on their carriages, and accompanied by the Second Punjab Cavalry, pushed on to that place, where they found that the officers of the Third had escaped into the Fort, and that the Sepoys were crossing the river at a ferry some four miles distant. After a while, the main body of the troops from Jullundhur came up, and then the question arose as to whether anything could be done. Those who would fain have done something, did not know what to do, and those who knew what should be done, were not minded to do it. No one from Jullundhur knew the way from Phillour to the Sutlej, and the Phillour officers, shut up in the Fort, sent out no one to guide them. So the result was that no one did anything, and the pursuing column bivouacked bravely for the night. It is understood that the highest military authorities were convinced that Brigadier Johnstone had done his duty nobly—but History and the Horse Guards are often at issue.

Ricketts and Thornton.

Such, however, are the alternations of light and shadow in this narrative, that the narrator has never to tarry long without an example of that activity of British manliness which saved the Empire in this great convulsion. Whilst the Jullundhur Brigadier was thus earning the approbation of the highest military authorities, two junior civilians, acting only on their own impulses, were doing their best to cut off the march of the mutineers. One of these was a young gentleman named Thornton, who had been one of the first to enter the service by the open door of general competition, and who seemed to be bent on proving that the reproach levelled at the new order of civilians—that they were men of books, not men of action—was unfounded and unjust. He had ridden over from Loodhianah to Phillour to pay the regiment there, had learnt that the troops had risen, and had pushed on with all haste to the river-bank and cut away the bridge of boats. Hurrying then back to Loodhianah, he found that Mr. Ricketts, the Deputy-Commissioner, had received by telegraph information of the rising at Jullundhur, and was already making such preparations as he could for the security of that important post. Lying on the great high road from the Punjab to Hindostan, it was to be assumed that the mutineers would sweep through it, carrying destruction with them, on their route to the appointed goal of Delhi. Little was it that Ricketts could have done in any case, but that little was made less by the fact that the news of the Jullundhur rising reached the Sepoys at Loodhianah almost as soon as it had reached himself; and they were not less prompt in action. Those Sepoys were a detachment of the Third from Phillour. They were waiting for the signal and ready to strike. Their first movement was to seize the Fort and the Treasury. There were no European troops, so this was easily accomplished. The situation was one of infinite peril. The mutineers from Jullundhur and Phillour might be expected at any hour. But the Sutlej was still between them, and if Ricketts could guard the passages of the river only for a little space, the pursuing column might come upon the fugitives before they had crossed. Fortunately, the Fourth (Rothney's) Sikh Regiment had reached Loodhianah that morning after a long and weary march. Three companies, under Lieutenant Williams, were now told off for service, and the Rajah of Nabha was called upon for a Contingent. The chief sent detachments of Horse and Foot, with two six-pounder guns, and with these Ricketts went out to dispute the passage of the river.

1857.
June.

1857. June 8. The first thing was to ascertain the exact position of the enemy. So Ricketts, crossing the river in a ferry-boat, walked along the opposite bank to Phillour, and there learnt that the insurgents, having been baulked by Thornton's destruction of the bridge, had made for a Ghaut, some four miles higher up, at a narrow bend of the stream, and were preparing for the passage of the Sutlej.* Possessed of this important information, the gallant civilian recrossed the river, rejoined the detachment, and, in concert with Lieutenant Williams, made his arrangements to check the advance of the mutinous regiments. Had Johnstone, with the Europeans, been in pursuit of the mutineers, the enemy would have been between two fires, and the bulk of them would have been destroyed. But the Brigadier made no sign; and so Ricketts and Williams had all the work and all the glory to themselves. It was ten o'clock at night when they came within sight of the Sepoy regiments. The road was bad, the sand deep, the ditches numerous. Their guides had misled and deserted them, and much good time had been lost. The main body of the enemy, some sixteen hundred in number,† had already crossed, and our little handful of Sikh troops now came suddenly upon them. Ricketts, who improvised himself into a Commandant of Artillery, took charge of the guns, and Williams directed the movements of the Cavalry and Infantry. The guns were at once unlimbered, but the horses of one of them took fright and fled, carrying the six-pounder with them.

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* "At the Lussam Ferry, four miles above Phillour, the advanced guard of the mutineers managed to seize a boat that was on the Jullundhur side, and crossing over in numbers, took possession of the other side also."—*Mr. Barnes's Report.*

† "The greater part of three regiments of Infantry and one regiment of Cavalry, but without guns."

1857. June 8—9.

The other gun, a nine-pounder, was well served, and before the enemy knew that we were upon them, it delivered a round of grape with good effect, whilst at the same time Williams's Sikhs poured in two destructive volleys. The mutineers returned the fire, and then the Nabha troops turned their backs upon the scene and fled like a flock of sheep. For some time the unequal contest was nobly maintained. Round after round from the one gun was poured in so rapidly and so steadily, that practised ears in Johnstone's camp, on the other side of the river, thought that they discerned the utterances of two or three field-pieces; whilst at the same time the Sikhs, spreading themselves out so as not to be outflanked by superior numbers, poured in volley after volley with destructive effect. But gallant as were these efforts, they could not last. During well-nigh two hours they kept back the surging multitude of the enemy; but then the gun ammunition was expended. The cartridges of the Sikhs had been nearly fired away; Williams had fallen, shot through the lungs; and the midnight moon revealed, with dangerous distinctness, the position of our little band. There was nothing, therefore, left for Ricketts but to draw off his force and return to the British Cantonment.

Rising at Loodhianah. June 9.

Then the mutinous regiments, no longer obstructed or opposed, swept on to Loodhianah. About an hour before noon, on the 9th of June, they entered the city. The company in the Fort fraternised with them. The turbulent classes rose at once, scenting a rich harvest of rapine, and for a little while disorder and destruction were rampant in the place. There were some peculiar elements in the population of Loodhianah from which danger was ever likely to

1857. June 9. flash out in seasons of general excitement.* Large numbers of aliens were there. Foremost amongst these were the Caubul refugees—the miserable incapables of the Suddozye Family, with their swarms of dissolute retainers—all eating the bread of British compassion, but hating the hand that fed them. Then there was the great colony of Cashmere shawl-weavers, who, sheltered and protected as they never could have been elsewhere, followed their peaceful calling unmolested, and held their gains in the most perfect security. Both of these classes now rose against us with a vehemence proportioned to the benefits they had received. The Caubulees were "conspicuous in the outrages and plunder committed in the city;" and the Cashmerees were among the foremost in "plundering the Government stores, in pillaging the premises of the American Mission, in burning the churches and buildings, in destroying the printing presses, and in pointing out the residences of Government officials, or known well-wishers of Government, as objects of vengeance for the mutinous troops." Besides these, there were large numbers of Mahomedan Goojurs, who had been wrought up to a high state of fanaticism by the preachings of an energetic Moulavee, and who were eager to declare a *jaidad*† against us. All these persons now welcomed the mutineers, and aided them in the work of spoliation. The prisoners in the gaol were released. Whatsoever belonged to Government—whatsoever belonged to Englishmen—was destroyed, if it could not be carried off; the quiet, trading communities were

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* "It is filled with a dissolute, lawless, mixed population of Caubul pensioners, Cashmere shawl-workers, Goojurs, Bowreahs, and other predatory races. There is a fort without Europeans to guard it, a city without regular troops to restrain, a district traversed by roads in every direction . . . a river which for months in the year is a mere network of fordable creeks."

† Holy war.

1857. June 9.

compelled to contribute to the wants of the mutineers in money or in kind; grain and flour were carried off from the bunniahs' shops; and, wherever a horse or a mule could be found, the rebel hand was laid instantly upon it. It was too much to expect that these traders, how much soever they may have benefited by British rule and profited by the maintenance of order, should take any active steps to aid the authorities in such a crisis. The bankers secreted their money-bags, and the merchants locked up their wares, and every man did what he thought best for himself in the face of the general confusion.

Escape of the Mutineers.

And what was Johnstone doing all this time? Johnstone was playing out with admirable effect another act of the great tragedy of "Too Late." The Europeans had heard the firing of the preceding night, and had waited eagerly for the order to move, but no order came. Three hours after Ricketts's one gun had been silenced by want of ammunition, Henry Olpherts, with his splendid troop of Horse Artillery, and a party of the Eighth Foot, was suffered to go through the ceremony of taking command of the "advance" of the force that was to march to the rescue of Loodhianah and to the extermination of the Jullundhur mutineers. But no sooner were they ready to move than fresh misgivings assailed the mind of the Brigadier. It would not be "safe" to send forward such a force without adequate supports. In vain Ricketts sent expresses to Johnstone's Camp, urging him to send forward the Horse Artillery to his aid; but the day wore on, the succours never came, and the enemy rioted unchecked in Loodhianah until nightfall.* Then the insurgent regi-

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* "In the mean time no troops arrived in pursuit. I sent twice, begging the Horse Artillery might advance, and they might have caused them (the mutineers) immense loss; but they could not be trusted to the

1857. June.

ments made a forced march towards Delhi, and when at last our Europeans made their appearance at Loodhianah, pursuit was hopeless. The Jullundhur insurgents had escaped.

The evil, which had been thus done or suffered by our inertness, was small in comparison with the danger which had been escaped. It was the true policy of the enemy, at that time, to occupy Loodhianah. With the Fort in their possession—guns mounted and manned, the Government treasure in their hands, and the bulk of the population on their side—they might, for a while at least, have successfully defied us. To the British cause, the loss of this important city, lying on the great high road from the Punjab to Delhi, would, indeed, have been a heavy blow. It would have affected disastrously, perhaps ruinously, the future operations of the war, by deferring indefinitely the capture of Delhi. But instead of this, the mutinous regiments merely carried themselves off, by the least frequented routes, to the Great Head-Quarters of Rebellion, there to swell the already swollen numbers of the garrison, without increasing its actual strength.*

Fourth Sikhs or the small detachment of Punjab Cavalry, and had to wait for the European Infantry; and so this second great opportunity to destroy these mutineers was lost, and as they had four miles' start of the European Infantry, of course pursuit was hopeless that evening."—*Ricketts.*

* "I imagine their plan was temporarily to hold the Fort and City of Loodhianah, where they could command the Grand Trunk Road from the Punjab to Delhi, whence they could have spread disorganisation throughout Cis-Sutlej, and have shaken the Sikh States, and by cutting off supplies and placing troops in requisition to attack them, have made a most untoward diversion for our small force before Delhi; but their ammunition was expended; in their hurry in leaving Jullundhur they had carried off blank for balled ammunition, and so they had to hurry on by forced marches, avoiding any possibility of collision with our troops."—*Mr. Ricketts's Report.* The writer admits that this is for the most part conjecture, but he thinks that it is borne out by the fact that, if their ammunition had not failed them, the mutineers had the game in their own hands. I have had no opportunity of investigating the hypothesis that the Jullundhur regiments supplied themselves with blank cartridges by mistake.

1857. June.

It was now necessary to make a severe example of all who had been guilty of aiding and abetting the mutinous Sepoys, or who had taken advantage of the confusion which they had created. It was easy to bring the guilt home to the offenders, for plundered property was found in their possession; and now that English authority had reasserted itself in all its strength, witnesses flocked in from all sides, eager to give damnatory evidence against their fellow-citizens. More than twenty Cashmerees and others were promptly tried, and as promptly executed. The telegraphic wires brought from higher official quarters the necessary confirmation of the sentence of death, and on the evening of their trial the prisoners were hanged. Others detected in seditious correspondence shared the same fate. "It was by such measures as these," wrote the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, "that the peace was preserved; any vacillation or tender-heartedness would have been fatal, for rebellion would have spread in the province, and many valuable lives would have been lost in recovering our authority. So long as order was maintained here, our communications with the Punjab on the one hand, and the Delhi force on the other, were kept unimpaired; as it was, with daily convoys of treasure, ammunition, stores, and men passing down the road, I am happy to say that not a single accident occurred."

The next step was to disarm the people of Loodhianah. Taking advantage of the presence of Coke's regiment, which afterwards made good its march to Delhi, Ricketts disarmed the town of Loodhianah. And in other parts of the Cis-Sutlej States the same process was carried on with the zeal, vigour, and success that distinguished all the efforts of the officers

1857. June—July.

of the Punjabee Commission. But, doubtless, as on former occasions, of which I have spoken, there were many concealments, even in our own territories; and, moreover, the contiguity of the Protected Native States afforded opportunities of evading the search, to which the people on the border eagerly resorted. Mr. Barnes called upon the chiefs to adopt similar measures, and they formally complied; but he said that they were slow to move and suspicious of our intentions.* There was, in truth, a general feeling of mistrust; and it was presently ascertained that the people were not only concealing arms, but making large purchases of saltpetre and sulphur, and other components of gunpowder, for use in a day of danger. It was all in accordance with their genius and their temper, and it could excite no surprise in any reasonable mind. But it was necessary to grapple with these evils; so proclamation was made, rendering the carrying of arms a misdemeanor, and restrictions upon the sale and export of all kinds of ammunition and their components.†

~~Whilst preventive and~~ precautionary measures of this kind were being pushed forward throughout the Punjab, there were unceasing efforts all along the great road to Delhi to furnish the means of transporting stores for the service of Barnard's army. In this most essential work civil and military officers worked manfully together; and although there were many difficulties to be overcome, the great thoroughfare

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* Mr. Barnes's Cis-Sutlej Report.

† At this time communication between Calcutta and the Punjab was very slow and irregular, and tidings of the legislative enactments passed in Calcutta had not yet reached the Frontier Province. But Mr. Barnes, writing at a later period, observed, "That in the measures adopted for the trial and punishment of mutineers and heinous criminals, or for disarming the population, or checking the importation of military stores, we only anticipated the acts almost simultaneously passed at Calcutta by the wisdom of the Legislative Council."

1857. June—July.

was soon alive with carts and carriages and beasts of burden conveying downwards all that was most needed by the Army, and especially those vast supplies of ordnance ammunition which were required to make an impression on the walls of the city which we were besieging.* It is hard to say what might not have befallen us if, at this time, the road had not been kept open; but the loyalty of the great chiefs of the Protected Sikh States, and the energy and sagacity of Barnes and Ricketts, secured our communications, and never was the Delhi Field Force in any danger of the interception of its supplies.†

Thus was the Punjab aiding in many ways the great work of the recovery of Delhi and the suppression of the revolt. It was sending down material, and it was sending down masses of men. Nor was this all that it could do. The Punjab had become the Nursery of Heroes. And it was from the Punjab that now was to be drawn that wealth of individual energy upon which the destinies of nations so greatly

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* To the activity of Captain Briggs, who organised a military transport train, and worked it with admirable success, we are mainly indebted for these good results. But we are a little too prone to forget such services as these, or, perhaps, we undervalue the importance of feeding an army and loading its guns.

† These services were afterwards becomingly acknowledged by General Wilson, who wrote to Sir John Lawrence, saying: "I beg to bring specially to your notice the very important services rendered by the Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, Mr. G. C. Barnes, to whose good government, under yourself, may be partly attributed the preservation of peace in these districts, and to whose influence with the independent chiefs I am mainly indebted for the valuable aid of the Puteeala and Jheend Contingents, by means of which our communication with our rear has been kept open, and the safe escort of numerous convoys of stores and ammunition to the camp has been effected; and his most energetic assistant, Mr. M. Ricketts, the Deputy-Commissioner of Loodhianah, of whose unflagging exertions in procuring carriage, aiding the movements of troops, and forwarding supplies, and of his hearty co-operation with the magazine officer in the despatch of ammunition, I am deeply sensible, and cannot speak too highly."

1857. June. depend. Death had made its gaps in the Delhi Army. The death of General Anson sent General Reed down to the Head-Quarters of the Army as Senior Officer in the Presidency, and, therefore, Provisional Commander-in-Chief. Who then was to command the Frontier Force? For some little time there was a terror in the Peshawur Council lest Brigadier Johnstone, who had smoothed the way for the safe conduct of his Native troops to Delhi, should be appointed to the command of the division. It could not be permitted whilst Sydney Cotton was there. Little by little regulation was giving way to the exigencies of a great crisis; and when news came that the Adjutant-General of the Army had been killed in the battle of Budlee-ka-serai, there was a demand for the services of Neville Chamberlain as the fittest man in the country to be Chief of the Staff of the besieging Force. So Nicholson was "instinctively selected to take command of the Punjab Movable Column, with the rank of Brigadier-General,"* whilst Chamberlain proceeded downwards to join the Head-Quarters of the Army. What Barnard and his troops were doing it is now my duty to narrate.

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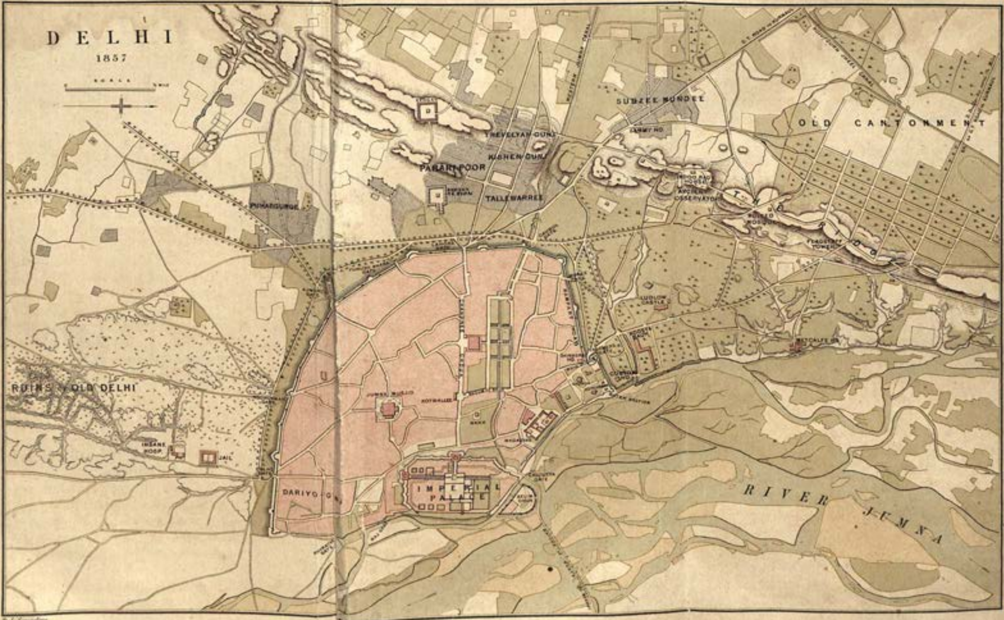
* These words are in Colonel Edwardes's Official Report. The writer adds: "How common sense revenges itself on defective systems, when real danger assails a state! Had there been no struggle for life or death, when would Neville Chamberlain and John Nicholson, in the prime of their lives, with all their faculties of doing and enduring, have attained the rank of Brigadier-General? Why should we keep down in peace the men who must be put up in War?"

page 57



DELHI

1857

SCALE
SUBZEE MUNDEE
ARMY HQ
OLD CANTONMENT
TREVELYAN GUNJ
KISHEN GUNJ
PAHARIPOOR
TALLEWARREE
PUHARGUNGE
THE RIDGE
ANCIENT OBSERVATORY
FLAGSTAFF TOWER
LUDLOW CASTLE
METCALFE HO.
CUSTOM
CALCUTTA GATE
JUMMA MUSJID
KOTWALLEE
BANK
MAGAZINE
DARIYO-GUNJ
IMPERIAL PALACE
RUINS OF OLD DELHI
INSANE HOSP.
JAIL
RIVER JUMNA
WESTERN JUMNA CANAL
G.T. ROAD TO KURNAUL

Fred. Saunders.

London: W. H. Allen & Co. Waterloo Place.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL BARNARD'S POSITION—IMPORTANCE OF THE CAPTURE OF DELHI—DELHI AND ITS ENVIRONS—QUESTION OF AN IMMEDIATE ASSAULT—COUNCILS OF WAR—ABANDONMENT OF THE NIGHT ATTACK—WAITING FOR REINFORCEMENTS—ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY—THE CENTENARY OF PLASSEY—ARRIVAL OF NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN AND BAIRD SMITH—DEATH OF GENERAL BARNARD.

June, 1857.

The British position at Delhi.

THE Delhi Field Force having planted its Head-Quarters on the old site of the British cantonments on the "Ridge," was now spreading itself out over the ground which it had conquered, in the manner best adapted to both offensive and defensive operations. Seldom has a finer position been occupied by a British Army; seldom has a more magnificent panorama turned for a while the soldier's thoughts from the stern realities of the battle. It was difficult not to admire the beauty of the scene even amidst the discomforts of the camp and the labours of the first encamping. The great city, with its stately mosques and minarets, lay grandly at our feet, one side resting upon the Jumna, and others forming a mighty mass of red walls standing out threateningly towards the position which we had occupied. And scattered all about beneath us were picturesque suburbs, and stately houses, walled gardens and verdant groves refreshing to the eye; whilst the blue waters of the flowing Jumna glittered in the light of

1857. June.

the broad sun. It was not an hour for philosophical speculation or for the indulgence of any romantic sentiments concerning the decay of empires and the revolutions of dynasties; else was there much food for thought in the strange circumstances which had brought a British Army to besiege a city which, only a month before, had been regarded as securely our own as London or Liverpool, and to contend against a Sovereign who, within the same brief space of time, had been held in contempt as a harmless puppet. There was no room in the minds of our military chiefs for such thoughts as these. They contemplated the position on which they had encamped our army with the keen eyes of practical soldiers, and looked around them from their commanding position upon the ground that was to be the scene of their future operations. And this was the result of the survey.

Roads and canals.

Intersecting the old Cantonment towards the left-centre, and then following its front towards the right, was a road which joined the Great Trunk from Kurnaul, beyond the extremity of the Ridge, and led down, through a mass of suburban gardens and ancient edifices, to the Caubul gate of Delhi. Two other roads, also leading from Kurnaul, diverged through the Cantonment to different gates of the city. And scarcely less important to us than the roads were the canals which were cut through the country in the neighbourhood of our camp. In the rear of our encampment was a branch canal, known as the Nujufgurh Jheel Aqueduct, which carried the waters emptied into this lake to the stream of the Jumna. To the right rear of our position this great drain was intersected by the Western Jumna Canal, which passing through a bold excavation of the solid rock, flowed through the great suburbs of Delhi, and

1857. June.

entering the city by a culvert under the walls, traversed the length of its main street and emptied itself into the river near the walls of the Imperial Palace. And it was a source of especial rejoicing to the British chiefs, firstly, that our position was open to the rear, and that there were good roads leading down to it, from which we could keep up a constant communication with the Punjab, now become our base of operations; and, secondly, that there was an abundant supply of water in the Nujufgurh Canal. It was the driest season of the year, and in common course the canal would have been empty. But the excessive rains of 1856 had so flooded and extended the area of the lake, that it had not ceased even in the month of June to emit an unfailing supply of pure good water to fill the aqueduct in the rear of our position*—water in which not only our people could freely bathe, but which they could drink with safety and with pleasure; and it is hard to say how much the salubrity of the camp was maintained by this providential dispensation. Nor was it merely in a sanitary point of view that this flow of water was so advantageous to the English, for in its mili-

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* See remarks of Colonel Baird Smith on this subject (Unfinished Memoir): "By one of those remarkable coincidences of which so many occurred to favour the English cause as to suggest the idea of a special Providence in them, the rains of the year preceding the mutiny had been unprecedented in magnitude, and the whole basin had been gorged with water, the area covered exceeding a hundred square miles. . . . . From the enormous accumulation of water in the Jheel during 1856, this canal, ordinarily dry during the hot season, was filled with a deep, rapid stream of pure and wholesome water during the whole period of the siege. It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the value of such a provision both to the health and comfort of the troops, for without it the river, two miles distant, or the wells in Cantonment, all brackish and bad, must have been the sole sources of water supply for man and beast. Sanitary arrangements were facilitated, good drainage secured, abundant means of ablution and healthy aquatic exercises were provided, and the Jheel Canal was not merely a good defensible line for military operations, but a precious addition to the comfort and salubrity of the camp."

1857. June.

tary aspects it was equally favourable to defensive purposes. And so there were comfort and encouragement in the contemplation of our position.

The Ridge.

And a nearer inspection of the Ridge, though there were some countervailing circumstances to detract from the general satisfaction, had an assuring effect upon the British Leader and the Staff by whom he was surrounded. It had been, in part at least, the site of the old Delhi Cantonment. The left of this rocky chain rested upon the Jumna some three or four miles above Delhi, whilst the right extremity approached the Caubul Gate of the City at a distance of about a thousand yards. "Formed of a hard, compact, semi-crystalline quartz rock, disposed in layers, and presenting occasional natural cliffs on the city side,"* it extended along a line of rather more than two miles, at an elevation of from fifty to sixty feet above the general elevation of the city.† The natural soil was so hostile to cultivation that the general aspect of the Ridge was bare and rugged; and the same gritty, friable qualities of the earth rendered it especially ill-adapted to defensive purposes, for where no cohesive properties existed the construction of earth-works was almost impossible. On the left and centre of the Ridge, obliquely to the front of attack, the tents of the English were pitched a little to the rear of the ruins of their old houses, which effectually concealed us from the besieged. The extreme left of the Ridge was so far retired from the main position of the enemy as to be in little danger from his assaults, but our post on the extreme right "invited attack from the moment of occupation to the close of the operations."[*]

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* MS. Memoir of Colonel Baird Smith.

† Baird Smith says in the Memoir quoted above that its utmost height above the level of the city does not exceed eighty or ninety feet." In another memorandum he says that "the average command may be taken for practical purposes at about forty feet."

Hindoo Rao's house.

This position on the extreme right was surmounted by a somewhat extensive building of comparatively modern construction, known as Hindoo Rao's House. The former owner of this edifice was a Mahratta nobleman, who is said to have been nearly connected with the Family of Scindiah. Political necessities had compelled his residence at a distance from Gwalior, and he had settled himself in the neighbourhood of Delhi, where he had earned a good reputation among all classes of the community. Of a robust manhood and a genial temperament, he was noted for his hospitality.[†] The house had been built and fitted up much after the fashion of an Anglo-Indian mansion of the better class. But on his death it had been left without an occupant, and on the arrival of Barnard's force it was found empty and deserted. It was a roomy and convenient edifice, with good approaches both from the Cantonment and the City; and, apart from the excellence of the situation, which strongly recommended it as an advanced post, it afforded good shelter and accommodation for a considerable body of troops.

The Flagstaff Tower.

Between the two extreme points of the Ridge were other important posts, destined to occupy conspicuous places in the history of the coming siege. Near the point at which the middle road of the three crossed the Ridge, was the Flag-staff Tower, of which mention has before been made; for thence was it that our people, on the fatal 11th of May, huddled together for transient safety, had looked forth despair-

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[*] Baird Smith.

[†] "The old man was a well-known member of the local society—a keen sportsman, a liberal and hospitable gentleman, of frank, bluff manners, and genial temperament." — *Baird Smith's Unfinished Memoir.*

1857. June. ingly towards the city, from which the signal for massacre was to come.* A double-storied, circular building, it had a fine command of observation, comprehending the country lying between the Ridge and the walls of the city, and was sufficiently strong to afford good shelter to troops. Further on to the right—about midway between the Flag-staff and Hindoo Rao's house—was a ruined mosque "of the old Pathan type," which had also good walls of masonry, and was well suited for an outpost, as it afforded both shelter and accommodation to our men; and still further along the Ridge road, at a distance of some two hundred yards from our position on the extreme right, was an ancient Observatory,† of somewhat irregular structure, ill-lighted and ill-ventilated, but still a serviceable building, as it afforded good support to the advanced position on our right, which was so long to bear the brunt of the affray. At these four points, Sir Henry Barnard, after the battle of Budlee-ka-Serai, established strong pickets, each supported by guns.

The Mosque.

The Observatory.

The Suburbs. The country around Delhi, which the roads and canal-cuttings above described intersected after passing the Ridge, was a varied mass of ruined and habitable houses, walled gardens, green woodlands, cultivated rice fields, and unhealthy swamps. Beyond Hindoo Rao's house to the rear was the beautiful suburb of Subzee-mundee (or the Green Market), lying along the great Trunk Road—a cluster of good houses and walled gardens, which afforded shelter to the enemy, and were, indeed, the very key of our position. And beyond this the plain was "covered with dense gardens and thick groves, houses, and walled enclosures bordering upon the great canal." Beyond Subzee-mundee, on this line of the Great Trunk Road, stretching towards the Caubul Gate of the City, were the villages of Kishen-gunj, Trevelyan-gunj, Paharipoor, and Tallewarree. These villages were amongst the worst of the local evils opposed to us, for they were near enough to the walls of the city to cover the enemy as they emerged from their stronghold, and afforded them a sheltered approach as they advanced towards our position on the Ridge; whilst they were too far off from our posts to admit of our occupying them in force.* Looking out from the Ridge towards the centre and left of our encampment, the space before the city appeared to be less crowded. There were a few somewhat imposing buildings irregularly scattered about this expanse of country, among which that known as Metcalfe House was one of the most conspicuous. It stood on the banks of the river, in the midst of an extensive park, and was almost buried in thick foliage. Some substantial outbuildings in the park, with a mound of some altitude in their rear, seemed to recommend themselves as serviceable outposts for future occupation. Between the Metcalfe House and the city was an old summer-palace of the Delhi Emperors, known as the Koosya Bagh. It was then little more than one of the many memorials of the former grandeur of the Mogul sovereigns with which the new capital was surrounded; but the lofty gateways, the shaded cloisters and arcades, and the spacious court-yards, of which it was composed, showed, even in their decay,

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* *Ante*, book iv., chap. iii. It is stated that a cart load of dead bodies was found in it, supposed to be the bodies of officers of the Fifty-fourth.

† Built by the Rajpoot Astronomer, Rajah Jeit Singh.

1857.
June.

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* "They were all strong positions, and Kishen-gunj pre-eminently so, from its massive masonry enclosures and commanding site on the slope of the right flank of the Gorge."—*Baird Smith.*

1857. June.

that it had once been a place of no common architectural beauty.* More remote from the river, and almost in a line with the Cashmere Gate of the City, was Ludlow Castle—a modern mansion of some importance, which had been the home of the late Commissioner, Simon Fraser, slaughtered in the Delhi Palace.† It was erected on the crest of a ridge sloping down towards the city walls, with the dry bed of a drainage canal at its base. And on the line of the Jumna, between the Koosya Bagh and the water-gate of the city, was a spacious modern building of the English official type, but surrounded by trees and shrubs, looking out from the windows of which it almost seemed that the city walls were overhanging the place.‡ These were the most noticeable edifices, which attracted the attention of our people on the Ridge, as posts, which in the coming operations might be turned to account, whilst in the intervening spaces it was seen that there were gardens and groves, sometimes intersected by deep ravines. These fine breadths of luxuriant foliage, seen from the higher ground, were pleasant to the eye of the English soldier; but it was too probable that they would prove to be as favourable to the operations of the enemy as damaging to our own.§

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* "Its interior was in ruins, but sufficient indications of its design and structure remained to show it to have been one of the rich examples of florid architecture of the later Moguls, of which Delhi possesses so many beautiful illustrations; and the broad space, with its walls, was overgrown with orange-trees, and limes, and rose-bushes, and other shrubs, all growing in the wildest luxuriance."—*Baird Smith, Unpublished Memoir.*

† Mr. Russell, in his "Diary in India," speaks of Ludlow Castle as "a fine mansion, with turrets and clock-towers, something like a French château of the last century."

‡ Baird Smith.

§ "They offered innumerable facilities for occupation by armed men of any degree of discipline, and in truth so incompatible were its features generally with the action in mass of disciplined troops that the many combats of which it was the scene were rather trials of skill between small bodies or individuals than operations by mass."—*Baird Smith.* "The luxuriant foliage, though picturesque as a landscape-effect, concealed to a damaging ex-

1857.
June.

The City.

And over these tracts of country the British Commander now looked at the great city itself, and surveyed the character of its defences. The circuit of its walls extended to some seven miles, two of which were covered by the side which ran parallel to the river, and were completely defended by it. The rest formed an irregular figure, partly facing obliquely the line of our position on the Ridge, and partly turned towards the country on the left. These landward walls, about twenty-four feet in height, consisted of a series of curtains of red masonry, terminating in small bastions, each capable of holding from nine to twelve guns. Around them ran a dry ditch, some twenty-five feet in breadth and somewhat less than twenty feet in depth, the counterscarp being an earthern slope of very easy descent, "much water-and-weather worn." There was something that might be called a glacis, but to the eye of a skilled engineer it was scarcely worthy of the name.* The entrances to the city through these substantial walls of masonry were numerous. A series of so-called gates—for the most part in the near neighbourhood of the several

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tent the movement of our enemies, who, creeping out of the Cashmere or Lahore gates, would, under cover of trees and walls and houses, reach unperceived almost the foot of our position on the Ridge. It was thus that our engineers found it necessary to lop away branches and cut down trees and bushes, marring the beauty of the scene, but adding to our security."—*MS. Memorandum by an Officer of Artillery.*

* Baird Smith. The most recent writer on the subject of the material aspects of Delhi, quoting a professional description of the fortifications, says, "The 'original round towers formed into angular bastions,' the 'crenelated curtains,' and the fine glacis covering three-fourths or more of the height of the wall,' are the additions and improvements of English engineers of the present century."—*Bholonauth Chunder—Travels of a Hindoo.* I rely, however, on Baird Smith's authority more confidently than on any other. [Since this was written I have read in Major Norman's "Narrative" that there was before Delhi "an admirable glacis covering the wall for a full third of its height." As this is a high authority I think it right to quote Baird Smith's words: "The glacis scarcely merits the name, as it is but a short slope, seventy or eighty feet in breadth, springing from the crest of the counterscarp, and provided with no special means of obstruction."]

1857. June. bastions—were to be seen at irregular intervals along the walls. They were abutments of heavy masonry, but not without some architectural pretensions, comprising handsome arched gate-ways, which were surmounted by towers, forming stations or look-out posts for the city guards. These gates were ten in number—one was on the river side of the city; another led down to the Bridge of Boats from the extreme corner of the King's Palace;* and the rest were on the landward sides. The gates, known as the Cashmere Gate, the Moree Gate, and the Caubul Gate, were those most easily assailable from our position on the Ridge. Indeed, it was only on one side of the great walled city that the English Commander, looking down from his newly-erected camp, could hope to make an early impression. To invest so extensive a place with so small a force was an absolute impossibility. It was as much as we could do to invest this front—about one-seventh of the entire enceinte—leaving all the rest to the free egress and ingress of the enemy.

The Palace. The Palace, or, as it was sometimes called, the Fort, of Delhi was situated about the centre of the river-front of the city, one side almost overhanging the waters of the Jumna. The artist pronounced it to be "a noble mass of building of truly beautiful design, vast magnitude, and exquisite detail;" but to the eye of the scientific soldier—it appeared to be capable of only very feeble resistance to the appliances of modern warfare. Its defences consisted chiefly of high walls and deep ditches, with "most imperfect arrangements for flanking or even direct fire."† And on the north-east side, partly resting on

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* These gates were known respectively as the Raj-ghaut and the Calcutta Gates. By them the mutineers had entered on the 11th of May.

† Baird Smith.

1857. June.

the main stream of the Jumna, was the ancient Pathan Fort of Selimghur, separated from the Palace by a narrow stream of the river, which was crossed by a bridge of masonry. It was, for defensive purposes, an important out-work, which, manned with heavy guns, might play along the river-side as far as the Metcalfe House, and enfilade the approaches to the city in that direction. Such were the principal material objects which presented themselves to Barnard and his Staff, when their telescopes on that June morning swept the country which lay between the River and the Ridge. And as they estimated the worth of all these several posts for offensive or defensive purposes, they endeavoured to calculate also the numerical strength of the enemy within the walls. But there was little more than dim conjecture to guide them. It was assumed that the bulk of the Meerut and Delhi Troops—five regiments of Infantry, one regiment of Cavalry, and a company of Native Artillery—were now within the walls of the city. And it was not less certain that the Sappers and Miners from Meerut, the Head Quarters of the Alighur Regiment, the bulk of the Regiments from Ferozpore, large detachments of Native Infantry from Muttra, and Irregulars from Hansi, Hissar, and Sirsa, had swollen the stream of insurrection within the circuit of Delhi. To these might be added the King's Guards, and, probably, large numbers of Native soldiers of all branches absent from their regiments on furlough, according to custom at that season of the year. And these trained soldiers, it was known, had at their command immense supplies of ordnance, arms, ammunition, and equipments, wanting none of the materials of warfare for a much larger force. To the General, who had served at Sebastopol, it appeared that the strength of Delhi thus garrisoned had been

1857. June. greatly underrated by those who believed that it was to be disposed of in a day.*

And against this great walled city thus garrisoned what had Barnard brought? Collectively it may be said that he had three thousand European soldiers and twenty-two field guns. This European force consisted of—

Her Majesty's Ninth Lancers. Two squadrons of the Carabineers. Six companies of Her Majesty's Sixtieth Rifles. Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth Foot. The First Bengal (Company's) Fusiliers. Six companies of Second Bengal (Company's) Fusiliers. Sixteen Horse Artillery Guns, manned by Europeans. Six Horse Battery Guns, also Europeans: with the Siege-train, the details of which have been already given.

Besides these there were two other bodies of reliable troops, as good as Europeans—the Goorkah battalion under Reid, and the Punjab Guide Corps under Daly. There were also a hundred and fifty men of the old regiment of Sappers and Miners, that had mutinied at Delhi, and who were still believed to be staunch. In Barnard's camp, also, were a regiment of Irregular Native Cavalry (the Ninth), and a portion of another (the Fourth), but the fidelity of both was doubtful.

June 9, 1857. General Barnard at Delhi. There were many then in all parts of India, especially among the more eager-minded civilians, who believed that to reach Delhi was to take it. Habituated to success, and ever prone to despise our enemies, it seemed to our people, in this conjuncture, to be a settled thing that the force moving on Delhi, by whomsoever commanded, should, in the language of the day, "dispose of it," and then proceed to finish the mutineers in other parts of the country. Even the cool brain of Lord Canning conceived this idea of the facility of the enterprise. It was thought that the Delhi Field Force might march into the city, make short work of the rebels, the King and Royal Family included; and then, leaving there a small British garrison, proceed to the relief of Lucknow, Cawnpore, or any other beleaguered position in that part of Hindostan. And this belief in the possible was so common, that it soon began to take in men's minds the shape of the actual; and before the month of June was half spent, it was said in all parts of the country that Delhi had been retaken, and that the star of our fortune was again on the ascendant. 1857. June.

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* I have endeavoured in this description of Delhi to represent merely the appearances of the great city and the environs as they presented themselves to General Barnard and his Staff at the time of their first encamping on the Ridge. Other details will, from time to time, be given as the narrative proceeds. I have consulted a variety of authorities, but I am principally indebted to Colonel Baird Smith's unfinished Memoir of the Siege of Delhi. As this was written after he had been enabled to verify by subsequent inspection his impressions formed during the siege, I confidently accept the accuracy of his descriptions.

Whether, as was said at the time, and is still confidently maintained by some, if, after the victory of Budlee-ka-Serai, Barnard had swept on and pursued the enemy into the city, he might have driven them out, after great slaughter, with the loss of all their munitions of war, must ever remain a mystery. It was not attempted. But it was no part of the General's plan to sit down before Delhi and to commence the tedious operations of a protracted siege. It was assuredly not his temper to magnify dangers and difficulties or to shrink from any enterprise that promised even a chance of success. It might be a hazardous undertaking; he felt, indeed, in his inmost heart, that it was. But he knew that his countrymen expected him to do it. He knew that

1857. June 11. anything like hesitation at such a moment would bring down upon him a storm of reproach. He knew, also, that if he failed in the perilous enterprise, he would be charged with rashness and incapacity. But this appeared to the fine old soldier to be the lesser evil of the two. Right or wrong, he was prepared to risk it.

Question of a *coup-de-main.* With such thoughts heavy within him, Barnard was by no means slow to accept the counsel of the young Engineer officers, who urged upon him the expediency of an immediate attack upon the city. Nothing was plainer, than that delay would weaken our chances of success; for not only was the numerical strength of the enemy increasing by fresh accessions of mutineers, making the city of the Mogul their central rallying-point, but there was strong probability that the material defences of the place would be strengthened—especially by the simple device of bricking up the gateways. That this had not been done on the 11th, the Engineers ascertained; and on that day they were prepared with the plan of a *coup-de-main*, which they laid before the General, urging him to attempt it on the following morning at break of day. "We find," they said in the Memorandum placed in Barnard's hands, "that the Caubulee and Lahore Gates are not as yet bricked up—that the bridges in front of them are up to this time perfect—and that troops can approach from Camp under cover to four hundred and nine hundred yards of these gates respectively. An entrance can also be effected close to the Caubulee Gate by the channel through which the canal flows into the city. We recommend a simultaneous attempt to blow in the Lahore Gate by powder-bags, and such one of the two obstacles at the other point (namely, either the

1857.
June 11.

Caubulee Gate or the Canal grating close by it), as may be preferred on reconnaissance by the officers in charge of the explosion party." . . . "We are impressed with the necessity," they added, "of driving the enemy out of the City and into the Fort by the simultaneous advance of several columns, of which two shall pass along the ramparts right and left, taking possession of every bastion and capturing every gun, whilst the remainder, advancing towards the Palace by the principal streets of the City, will establish posts on the margin of the esplanade, which surrounds the Palace, communicating right and left with the heads of the adjoining columns. To this end we believe it essential that the attack should commence at the peep of dawn. We propose to effect the explosions at half-past three A.M.; intimation of success to be immediately followed by the advance of the columns detailed for each attack, which will be in readiness at the points hereafter indicated, half an hour before that time."

The report embodying this scheme was signed by four subaltern officers—by Wilberforce Greathed, by Maunsell and Chesney, of the Engineers, and Hodson, of the Intelligence Department, at a later period known as "Hodson, of Hodson's Horse."* The

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* Hodson himself has thus referred to the matter in one of the letters published by his brother: "Yesterday I was ordered by the General to assist Greathed, and one or two more Engineers, in forming a project of attack, and how we would do to take Delhi. We drew up our scheme and gave it to the General, who highly approved, and will, I trust, carry it out; but how times must be changed when four subalterns are called upon to suggest a means of carrying so vitally important an enterprise as this, one on which the safety of the Empire depends. Wilberforce Greathed is the next Senior Engineer to Laughton, Chesney is Major of the Engineer Brigade, and Maunsell commands the Sappers. I was added because the General complimentarily told me that he had the utmost value for my opinion; and though I am known to counsel vigorous measures, it is equally well known I do not urge others to do what I would not be the first to do myself."

1857. June 11. scheme was accepted by Barnard, and orders were issued for its execution. Soon after midnight everything was ready. The troops selected for this enterprise were duly warned. Each Engineer officer had June 12. Contemplated night attack. his appointed work. They were to assemble, under cover of the darkness of the night, between one and two o'clock, and to proceed noiselessly to the gates which were to have been blown in with powder-bags. But when the parade was held, an important part of the destined force was missing. A body of three hundred men of the First European Fusiliers was to have been brought up by Brigadier Graves; but at the appointed hour there was no sign of his appearance; and the column, thus weakened by their defection, was not strong enough to do the work before it. It was an intense disappointment to many eager spirits, who, on that June morning, believed that the stronghold of the enemy was within their grasp. But there seemed to be nothing left but the postponement of the enterprise; so, reluctantly, orders were given for the return of the storming party to their quarters. It is difficult not to believe that Brigadier Graves disobeyed orders. The excuse was that he misunderstood them, and the kind heart of Sir Henry Barnard inclined him to accept the excuse.*

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* Graves was Brigadier of the day on duty. The orders conveyed to him were verbal orders, and he rode to Barnard's tent to ask for a confirmation of them. The story is thus told, and with every appearance of authority by Mr. Cave-Browne: "Brigadier Graves was the field-officer of the day. About eleven o'clock that night he received verbal orders that the Europeans on picquet along the heights were to move off without being relieved for special duty; with a vague hint that a night-assault was in contemplation. On reaching the Flagstaff picquet we found the Native guards in the act of relief, and unable to believe that it was intended to leave that important position, with its two guns, in the charge of Natives only, he galloped down to the General's tent for further instructions. Here he heard that they were on the point of assaulting, and that every European infantry soldier was required. Now the Brigadier probably knew more of the actual strength of Delhi than any other soldier in the force;—he had commanded the brigade at

1857. June.

Revised scheme of assault.

But the project of a surprise, though thus delayed, was not abandoned. Wilberforce Greathed went hopefully to work, revising his scheme, and never ceasing to urge at Head Quarters the necessity of a night attack. The brief delay had at least one advantage. The moon was waning, and the cover of darkness was much needed for such an enterprise. Every day had made Barnard more and more sensible of the under-rated strength of the great city which lay before him. But he still clung to the idea of a sudden rush, and either a grand success or a crippling failure. "The place is so strong," he wrote to Lord Canning on the 13th of June, "and my means so inadequate, that assault or regular approach were equally difficult —I may say impossible; and I have nothing left but to place all on the hazard of a die and attempt a *coup-de-main*, which I purpose to do. If successful, all will be well. But reverse will be fatal, for I can have no reserve on which to retire. But, assuredly, you all greatly under-estimated the difficulties of Delhi. They have twenty-four-pounders on every gate and flank bastion; and their practice is excellent —beats ours *five* to *one*. We have got six heavy guns in position, but do not silence theirs, and I

June 13.

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the time of the outbreak; and when asked his opinion as to the chance of success, he replied, 'You may certainly take the city by surprise, but whether you are strong enough to hold it is another matter.' This made the General falter in his plans. Some of the young officers who were to take a leading part now came in and found him wavering. The Brigadier's remark had so shaken his purpose that, in spite of entreaty and remonstrance, he withdrew the consent which, if truth be told, he had never very heartily given to the project, and the assault was abandoned. The Rifles, already under the walls, and the advancing columns were recalled into camp." Major Reid expresses his opinion that the Brigadier was "perfectly justified in having declined to allow his picquets to be withdrawn without written orders" (Reid himself had received written orders, which he obeyed), and declares that the mischance was a fortunate event. Major Norman says that "there are few who do not now feel that the accident which hindered this attempt was one of those happy interpositions in our behalf of which we had such numbers to be thankful for."

1857. June 14.

really see nothing for it but a determined rush; and this, please God, you will hear of as successful."

About this time, Barnard had under consideration the revised scheme of Wilberforce Greathed for an attack on Delhi, "by means of simultaneous explosions of powder bags at the Caubulee and Lahore Gates, and of a charge against the Cashmeree Gate, to be fired at such time as the attention of the defenders of that enclosure may be engaged by the first-mentioned operations." Maunsell and Hodson were to conduct one explosion party, and Greathed and M'Neill the other. On the sound of the bugle, the appointed storming parties were to advance and stream through the openings thus effected. Every precaution was taken in the event of failure at any point, and precise instructions laid down as to the course to be pursued by each column of attack on the occurrence of any possible contingency, and nothing was wanted to show, not only by written description, but also by plans and charts, what each detail of the force was to do after entrance had been effected.

Councils of war.

This project, signed by Wilberforce Greathed, was dated June 14. On the following day a Council of War was held, and the scheme was considered. It was summoned by General Reed, who on Anson's death had come down from Rawul-Pindee, to assume as senior officer in the Presidency the Provisional Command in Chief of the Army,* and it was held in his tent. Sir Henry Barnard, Brigadier Wilson, Hervey Greathed, and the chief Engineer Officers, were present. The old adage that a Council of War never fights was not falsified in this case. It was set forth very strongly that the project of the Engineers involved the employment of nearly the whole of the Delhi Field Force; that there would be no reserve to fall back upon in the event of failure; and that, in the event of success, the enemy, streaming out of Delhi, might attack our Camp, seize our guns, and otherwise inflict grievous injury upon us. The military authorities were all in favour of delay, until such time as a reinforcement of at least a thousand men might arrive. The Civilian who appeared in Council as the representative of the Government of the North-Western Provinces was opposed to this delay. Very forcibly Hervey Greathed urged that "the delay of a fortnight would disappoint expectations, protract the disorders with which the country is afflicted, increase the disaffection known to exist among the Mahomedan population in the Bombay Presidency, and cause distrust on the part of our Native allies;" but he added that he could not take upon himself to say that the delay would lead the Native States actually to throw off their allegiance to the British Government, or endanger the safety of Cawnpore and Oudh, and of the country to the eastward. He assumed that British relations with the Native States were too close to be so easily dissolved, and that the concentration of English troops at Cawnpore would ensure the safety of the districts to which allusion had been made. Wilberforce Greathed, ever ready for an immediate attack on the blood-stained city, pleaded that it would be easy to revise the scheme, so as to leave a larger reserve in

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* He had joined the army about the time of its arrival at Delhi; but he was prostrated by sickness, unable to mount a horse, and quite incompetent to take any active part in the prosecution of the siege. It was not before the 11th that he was enabled to sit up and write a letter to Sir John Lawrence. But from that time his health began to improve, and he did good service by keeping the Chief Commissioner informed of the state of affairs at Delhi. The letters which the General then wrote were full of interesting and important details, and are distinguished by much clear good sense.

1857.
June 14.

Views of Hervey Greathed.

1857. June 16.

Camp. And, finally, it was agreed to defer the decision to the following day.

The Council reassembled.

On the 16th of June, therefore, the Council again assembled. The military leaders had thought over the grave question before them. The feeling at the first consultation had been that, on political grounds, it would be desirable to attack the city immediately on the arrival of the first reinforcements. But even this much of forwardness waned on the evening of the 15th, and the Commandant of Artillery, who had been moved by Hervey Greathed's arguments at the first Council, had fallen back upon his military experience, and had recorded a Memorandum, which had in no small measure influenced Barnard.* For the General was a man too little self-reliant for his position—too prone to be swayed hither and thither by the gusts of other men's recorded or spoken opinions. When, therefore, on the 16th of June, the Council of War again met, and all the military members of Council, except Wilberforce Greathed, were opposed to immediate operations, his resolution yielded to the array of authority before him, and again he began to entrench himself behind military principles and precedents. 1857. June 16.

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* Barnard recorded a note on the 15th, in which he said that circumstances were altered "by the fact that the Chief Officer of Artillery had represented that the means at his command were inadequate to silencing the enemy's guns on the walls, so necessary before any approach could be made," and that the "Chief Engineer represented that, as he had not the means of undertaking any necessary siege operations, the only practicable mode of attack rested on a *coup-de-main*, to effect which, and to occupy so large an area as the city of Delhi, required the employment of so much of the force under my command as to prevent my leaving a sufficient number to guard my camp, and enable me to sustain the position in the case of any reverse attending the attempt." But he added that political considerations of moment had been so strongly urged upon him, that, although reinforcements were shortly expected, and, in a military point of view, there could be no doubt that it would be expedient to wait for them, he must "submit to those entrusted with the political interests to determine whether to wait is less hazardous than to incur the risk of failure." He halted, indeed, between two opinions; but, he added, "I am ready to organise the attack to-night, if deemed desirable."

At that Council, on the 16th of June, Archdale Wilson put in, as the expression of his matured judgment on the subject, the paper which he had written on the day before, and which was now read aloud: "Taking into consideration the large extent of the town to be attacked," it said, "a full mile in breadth, nearly two miles in length from the Cashmere to the Delhi Gate, I must own that I dread success, on entering the town, almost as much as failure. Our small force, two thousand bayonets, will be lost in such an extent of town; and the insurgents have shown, by their constant and determined attacks upon our position, how well they can and will fight from behind cover, such as they will have in street-fighting in the city, when every man will almost be on a par with our Europeans. With the large number of heavy ordnance they have mounted on the walls (from thirty to forty pieces), we must also expect heavy loss during the assault of the gateways, as their grape-shot will command the ground from seven hundred or eight hundred yards round the walls. I gave my vote for the assault, on the arrival of our first reinforcements, solely on the political grounds set forth by Mr. Greathed, feeling, at the same time, that, as a military measure, it was a most desperate and unsafe one. It has, however, since struck me that, even in a political point of view, it would be wiser to hold our own position and wait for the reinforcements from Lahore, when we could ensure success in our attack. So long as we hold this position we keep the whole of the insurgents in and round Delhi. On taking the city, they will naturally form into large bodies and go through the country, Opinion of Brigadier Wilson.

1857. June 16. plundering in every direction. These bodies should be immediately followed by movable brigades, and cut up whenever come up with. It would be impossible, with the small force we now have, to leave a sufficient force for the protection of Delhi, and at the same time to send out such brigades as will be required. It appears to me a question of time only. The country all round, it is true, is in the hands of the insurgents and other plunderers, and must remain so until we can clear the country by our brigades. Mr. Greathed also contemplates the probability of the Native Chiefs, who are now favourable to us, becoming lukewarm in our cause; but what have they yet done for us? The Gwalior and Bhurtpore forces have long ago left us to our resources; and, from what I hear, little is to be expected from the Jyepore Contingent, until they are quite satisfied of our complete success over the insurgents."

Opinion of General Reed.

General Reed then declared his opinion at some length.* He said, that "Our success on the 8th had placed us in a favourable position, and one which we could hold for any time. It, therefore, became a question whether it would not be better to await the arrival of the strong reinforcements that were on their way to join us—the rear-guard of which must have reached Loodianah, so that by ordinary marches they ought all to be assembled here in fifteen days—than to risk an attack on the place at once, which would require every available bayonet of our force to effect, leaving no reserve, except Cavalry and heavy guns in position, thus risking the safety of our camp, stores, and magazines, which would be exposed to the incursion of many bodies of mutineers which we knew were encamped outside the walls of Delhi, and would take the opportunity of looting our camp, while our troops were attacking the city. There can be no question," he continued, "of the propriety of waiting, in a military point of view. In that all agree. We have, then, to look upon it in a political aspect, and to inquire whether, in that sense, so great a risk is to be run as an immediate assault would entail. There can be no doubt that expedition in terminating this state of affairs—which it is to be hoped that the capture of Delhi would accomplish—is a great consideration; but the possibility of failure, either total or partial, in that operation should be averted. This can only be done by having in hand such a force as will ensure success. That force, it is believed, will be assembled here in the course of fifteen days. In the mean time, by holding this position, we keep the chief body of the mutineers concentrated in and about Delhi. They know they cannot dislodge us, and that strong reinforcements are on their way to join us, while they are prevented from dispersing and marauding the country, which would be the effect of a successful attack upon Delhi at any time. Now we have not the means of sending out detachments to pursue them; then we should have ample means, and movable columns would be organised without delay to drive out the mutineers, and re-establish order in the neighbouring places which have suffered. It is not apparent, therefore, that the delay contemplated can have an effect, politically, sufficiently injurious to warrant the certainty of great loss and risk of possible failure, than which nothing could be more disastrous in its consequences.

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* The substance of what follows in the text was stated orally before the Council of the 15th. General Reed afterwards embodied it in a letter to Sir John Lawrence, and it was read out at the meeting on the following day.

1857.
June 16.

1857. June 16. We have suffered no diminution of prestige since we advanced on Delhi; all our objects have been accomplished, in spite of great obstacles, by the well-known redoubtable bravery of our troops, the mutineers driven from their strong positions, and their guns taken. Their sorties in force have since been repulsed with great loss to them, and in no one instance have they succeeded in gaining any, even the smallest, advantage. Their only effective defence lies in their walls, which, instead of being weak and unable to support the weight and resist the concussion of guns, are strong (recently repaired and strengthened by us), capable of sustaining a numerous and heavy artillery, with which all their bastions are mounted. As neither our time nor material would admit of a regular siege, an assault or storm can only be resorted to; but the success of this must *be ensured.* A contrary event would endanger the Empire. Another reason has been alleged for an immediate attack—the approaching rains; but they are seldom heavy till the ensuing month, and the sickness does not ensue till the month after. Every precaution must, of course, be taken in cutting drains in camp previously, to carry off the water, for the wounded (there are, I am happy to say, few sick); there are good pucka buildings, Native Hospitals, in the Lines which we occupy, so that no inconvenience need be expected as far as they are concerned, nor do I anticipate any for the Force. There has been no 'Chota Bursaut' yet, which generally precedes the regular rains, and is succeeded by some fine weather before these regularly set in. The necessity of having as large a force as can be made available is also apparent in the size of Delhi, the circumference of which is six or seven

1857. June 16.

miles. Having accomplished a lodgment, a strong force would be required to clear the ramparts and occupy the town, in which they may expect to be opposed at every house and wall behind which an insurgent can find room, under which it is known they can defend themselves with vigour. All things considered," concluded the General, "it is my opinion that the military reasons for awaiting the arrival of a sufficient force to ensure success far outweigh any political inconvenience that might arise, and which would all be remedied by certain success in the end."

Abandonment of the assault.

The result of these decided expressions of opinion on the part of the principal military officers at Delhi was that again the project of a *coup-de-main* was abandoned. In the face of such opinions, Barnard did not consider that he would be justified in incurring the serious risks so emphatically dwelt upon by Wilson and Reed. The expression of his personal views is on record. Writing on the 18th to Sir John Lawrence, he said: "I confess that, urged on by the Political adviser acting with me, I had consented to a *coup-de-main* which would have entailed all the above considerations; accident alone prevented it; it may be the interposition of Providence. From what I can hear, and from the opinion of others whom it became my duty to consult, I am convinced that success would have been as fatal as failure. A force of two thousand bayonets, spread over a city of the magnitude of Delhi, would have been lost as a military body, and, with the treachery that surrounds us, what would have become of my *matériel?* Be sure that I have been guided by military rule, and that it required moral courage to face the cry that will be raised against our inactivity

June 18.

1857. June 18. before Delhi; I can but act for the best, and wait any favourable opportunity for striking the blow. The great point raised by Mr. Greathed was the security of the Doab, and the desirableness of sending troops to Alighur from Delhi; but were I in the city now I could not do this. The castle and Selimghur yet remain before me, and to hold the city and attack these with a force under two thousand would prevent my detaching any there. The fact is, Delhi, bristling with lances, and garrisoned by men who, however contemptible in the open, have sagacity behind stone walls and some knowledge of the use of heavy ordnance--for hitherto they beat us in the precision of their fire—is not to be taken by the force from Umballah, with two troops of six-pounders; and its present strength has been greatly under-estimated. We have fought one action at Budlee-ka-Serai, where, so long as their guns remained to them, they appeared formidable. We have been subject to frequent attacks ever since, each made with some spirit, but repulsed with heavy loss, and having now the position taken up from which we must eventually reduce the place. It strikes me the best policy is to view it in its best light; it is a difficult task, and not to be accomplished without a sufficient force. Once in the town, the game is over if we can hold it, and immediately a force will be available for any purpose Mr. Colvin requires. Delay is vexatious, and losing men daily in these attacks is heart-breaking. I am well, but much harassed. I do assure you, the more I think of it, the more I rejoice in the hap-hazard experiment failing. It is some comfort to see that you agree; I hope others will now see I had more to do than to walk into Delhi."*

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* To this letter Barnard added a postscript, saying: "We gave them

1857. June.

But Wilberforce Greathed still did not despair of turning the hearts of the military chiefs towards his schemes of energetic action. Before a week had passed, he had submitted to Barnard another memorandum, urging that since the date of the last council the mutineers had been reinforced by the Nusserabad Brigade of two regiments and six guns, and the Jullundhur force of three regiments with one gun; that information had been received of the near approach to join the insurgents of the revolted Bareilly force, six regiments of Infantry with eight guns, and a regiment of Cavalry; and that, moreover, there were tidings of the Gwalior Contingent, of seven regiments of Infantry, three of Cavalry, and three batteries of Artillery, with a siege-train and magazine, having declared for the King of Delhi; and that in all human probability Agra would be besieged by the latter force—perhaps, indeed, already was in imminent peril. In such circumstances it had become a matter of infinite importance that a portion of the Delhi force should be detached to the relief of the former city. "But this is possible," he added, "only after Delhi is in our possession, and the mutineers' force dispersed. I respectfully submit, therefore, that a political necessity for pressing the attack of Delhi at

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a great beating yesterday, with *heavy loss*. They had attempted to take up a position, seize [ ] and Kishengunj, and Trevelyan-gunj and Paharipoor; with two small columns under Major Tombs, B.A., and Major Reid, Sirmoor Battalion, we not only dislodged them, but drove them out of the Serai above, and, in fact, drove all before us on this side of the Force. It has had a very chilling effect, we hear, and their spirits are much disturbed. But their fire from the north is as true as ever; so hot is it, that, until we approach ours nearer, we shall do no good; and such is the state of the service, that with all the bother of getting the siege-train, my commanding Artillery Officer can only man six guns, and my Engineer has not a sand-bag. It is really too distressing. I never contemplated making regular approaches, but I did expect my guns to silence those brought against me. But to do this they must be got nearer. Delay concentrates the insurgents."

1857. June.

almost any risk has arisen, and upon this ground I venture to submit a project of immediate attack concurred in by the officers who were commissioned to prepare the first project." But Barnard was not to be induced to swerve from the resolution formed by the Council of War. So, again, the younger and more eager spirits of the British camp were disappointed; and our troops fell back upon their old daily business of repulsing the enemy's sorties.

Work in camp.

There was, indeed, whilst this great design of the *coup-de-main* was under consideration at Head-Quarters, no lack of work in camp, and no lack of excitement. There were real alarms and false alarms, and officers and men on the Ridge were compelled to be constantly on the alert. Greatly outmatched as we were in Artillery, we could make little or no impression upon the batteries of the enemy or the walls of Delhi, and were, in truth, except when our Horse Artillery guns were brought into close quarters, only wasting our ammunition. The Sepoys, who knew our habits but too well, were wont to come out against us in the midst of the fiercest mid-day heats. In the climate they had an ally, to which they felt that they could trust; and many of our best and bravest were struck down, or went about shivering with ague or confused by quinine. The days were very hot and the nights were unwontedly cold; and these severe alternations are ever trying in the extreme to the European constitution. But nothing could abate the elastic cheerfulness and hopeful spirit of our people. Some of our younger officers then ripened into heroism of the highest order, and all displayed a constant courage in action, and an enduring fortitude in suffering, unsurpassed in the military annals of any country or any time. Day by day sad tidings came in of new mutinies and new massacres, and ever and anon fresh reinforcements of rebel regiments marched into Delhi to the sound of band-instruments playing our well-known English tunes. But the dominant feeling ever was, as these regiments arrived, that it was better for our countrymen and our country that they should be in the doomed city of the Mogul than they should be scattered about the provinces, assailing weak garrisons or defenceless cantonments, for, please God, the Delhi Field Force could not only hold its own, but, on some not very remote day, make short work of the Delhi rebels. How that was best to be done there were eager discussions in camp, leading to small results and no convictions. It must be admitted that there were many who shook their heads at the project of the *coup-de-main*, of which Greathed and Hodson had been the eager authors and the persistent exponents. It was said that, although the force might have made its way into Delhi, only a small part of it would have ever made its way out. And yet as weeks passed and no change came over the position of the Army before Delhi, men began to chafe under the restraints which had held them back. They felt that, in all parts of India, Englishmen were asking each other why Delhi was not taken; and it was painful to those gallant souls to think that their countrymen had expected of them that which they had not done. 1857. June.

Ever active among the active was Sir Henry Barnard. There was not an officer in camp, in the flower of his youth, who, all through this fiery month of June, worked day and night with such ceaseless energy as the Commander of the Delhi Field Force. He was not inured to the climate by long acquaintance with it. He had arrived in India at that very

1857. June. period of life at which the constitution can least reconcile itself to such extreme changes. But nothing could now induce him to spare himself. All day long he was abroad in the great glare of the summer sun, with the hot wind in his face; and it was often observed of him that he never slept. Men have ere now been carried safely through the most trying conjunctures by the possession of a power enjoyed by many of the world's greatest men—a power of sleeping and waking at will. But sleep had forsaken Barnard, and therefore the climate and the work were grievously assailing him. Not only was there strong within him, amidst all perplexities, an eager, dominant desire to do his duty to the country, for the sake of which he would at any moment have gone gladly to his death, but a tender concern for the welfare of all who were under his command, which kept him unceasingly in a state of unrest, passing from post to post by day and by night, now visiting a battery or directing a charge, and now gliding into an officer's hut, and seeing that he was sufficiently covered to resist the cold night air, as he lay asleep on his bed. He impressed all men with the belief that he was a good and gallant soldier, and the kindliest-hearted, truest gentleman who ever took a comrade by the hand.

But although he bore himself thus bravely before men, the inward care was wearing out his life. Never since War began, was General in command of an Army surrounded by so many discouragements and distresses. For in truth there was no possibility of disguising the fact that instead of besieging Delhi, he was himself the besieged. The inadequacy of his means of regular attack became every day more apparent. He had planted strong picquets with guns at some of the principal outposts of which I have spoken; and the enemy were continually streaming out to attack them. At Hindoo Rao's house, at the Flagstaff tower, and at the Observatory, detachments of infantry, supported by heavy guns, were planted from the commencement of our operations. The Metcalfe House would also have been garrisoned from the beginning, but for its distance from our supports and the paucity of troops at our disposal. The occupation of these buildings by the enemy was among the first effects of their offensive activity. It is believed that there was a peculiar feeling of animosity against the Feringhees in connexion with this edifice. It was said to have been erected on land formerly the site of a Goojur village; and that the Goojurs had flown upon it, eager for its demolition and resolute to recover their ancient holdings, on the first outbreak of the mutiny.* And there is another story still more significant. The building was originally the tomb of one of the foster-brothers of the Emperor Akbar. It had been converted into a residence by an English civilian, who was murdered, and the act of profanation had been vainly appealed against to another civilian, who afterwards shared the same fate.† Whatsoever effect these circumstances may have had upon

The Metcalfe House.

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* Cave-Browne's "Punjab and Delhi in 1857."

† Sir William Sleeman says: "The magnificent tomb of freestone covering the remains of a foster-brother of Akbar was long occupied as a dwelling-house by the late Mr. Blake, of the Bengal Civil Service, who was lately barbarously murdered at Jagpoor. To make room for his dining-tables, he removed the marble slab which covered the remains of the dead from the centre of the building against the urgent remonstrances of the people, and threw it carelessly on one side against the wall, where it now lies. The people appealed in vain, it is said, to Mr. Fraser, the Governor-General's representative, who was soon afterwards assassinated, and a good many attribute the death of both to this outrage upon the dead foster-brother of Akbar." Bholonauth Chunder, in his "Travels of a Hindoo," quotes this passage, and adds, "Rooms are let in the Metcalfe House for a rupee a day for each person."

1857. June. the conduct of the insurgents, it is certain that they gutted the building and did their best to destroy it.* June 11. It was a wreck when we returned to Delhi. A month had passed, and now the enemy were in force at the Metcalfe House, where they had established a formidable battery, which played upon the left of our position on the Ridge. On the morning of the 12th, the Sepoy mutineers came out to attack us both in front and rear. The ground between the Flagstaff Tower and the Metcalfe buildings favoured, by its ravines and shrubberies, the unseen approach of the enemy, who stole up within a short distance of our picquet at the former post, and before the English officer in command† could realise the position of affairs, had opened fire upon him within a range of some fifty yards. Our men replied promptly with the Enfield rifle, but Knox was shot dead by a Sepoy musketeer, and many of his men fell wounded beside him, whilst our artillerymen dropped at their guns. Meanwhile a party of mutineers had made their way to the rear of the British camp, and were pushing onward with desperate audacity into the very heart of it

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* "They stripped the roof of all its massive and valuable timber, carried off all the doors and windows, everything which they could themselves bring into use or convert into money; they demolished the costly marble statues and the unnumbered small articles of *vertù*, and then, with consistent Goth-like ruthlessness, tore up and piled in the centres of the rooms the volumes of that far-famed library, believed to be without its equal in India, and then set fire to the building." — *Cave-Browne.*

† Captain Knox, of Her Majesty's Seventy-fifth. Mr. Cave-Browne says that he "seemed to imagine that the Sepoys were coming to lay down their arms, and refused to let the men fire." Mr. Rotton (Chaplain's Narrative) says that Captain Knox "only a moment before shot with his own hand one of the enemy, when his eye caught sight of a Sepoy levelling a musket at him: 'See,' said he to one of his men, 'that man pointing at me; take him down.' The words had hardly escaped his lips, when the fatal shot took effect on his person. He was on one knee when singled out as a mark by the mutineer; and I am told, that as soon as he received the shot, he rose regularly to 'attention,' and then fell and expired without word or groan."

1857. June 12.

before our people were aroused. There was danger, indeed, on both sides. But the English got to their arms in time to repulse the attack and to carry victory before them. The enemy turned and fled; and after them went swift retribution. Rifles, Fusiliers, and other infantry detachments, aided by Daly's gallant Guide Corps, pushed after them, and dealing death as they went, pursued the fugitives through the Metcalfe grounds up to the walls of the city. The lesson was not thrown away upon us. A strong picquet was, from that time, planted at the Metcalfe House, and communications with this advanced post were kept open with the Flagstaff Tower on the Ridge.*

Reid's Picquet.

On the same day an attack was made on the right of our position, on that famous post of Hindoo Rao's House, where Reid with his regiment of Goorkahs, two companies of the Rifles, Daly's Guides, two guns of Scott's Battery, and some heavy artillery, was destined to bear the brunt of the affray through weeks and months of incessant fighting. Exposed to the fire of the enemy's guns planted on the Cashmere, Moree, and other bastions, this picquet was seldom suffered to enjoy many hours of continuous rest.† On the morning of the 12th, under cover of the guns, the mutineers came out in two bodies towards our right flank, the one moving directly on

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* "Thus throwing up, as it were, the left flank of our defences, and rendering it almost impossible for the enemy to pass round on that side."—*Norman.*

† Major Reid commanded all the posts on the right of the ridge. He describes the disposition of his troops as follows: "My own regiment and one company of Rifles occupied the House, and one company of Rifles the Observatory, where a battery for three heavy guns was constructed on the night of the 9th to reply to the Cashmere bastion. The centre battery for three eighteen-pounders was close to the House, and the guns were all laid for the Moree bastion. The guides I located in and behind the outhouses." Whenever the alarm was sounded, two more companies of the Rifles were sent up in support.

1857. June 12. the picquet at Hindoo Rao's house, the others pushing into the gardens of the Subzee-mundee.* Both attacks were repulsed, and with heavy loss to the enemy. But it was not without a disaster on our own side; for a detachment of Native Irregular Cavalry, on whose loyalty we had relied, went over to the enemy. And so sudden was the retrograde movement that the greater number of them escaped from the fire of our guns, which were turned upon them as soon as their treachery was disclosed.† Nor was this the only disheartening circumstance which, about this time, showed how little the Native soldiery generally believed that the Ikhbal of the Company was on the ascendant, even though we had recovered our old position before Delhi, and had beaten the enemy in three pitched battles. Mutiny of the Sixtieth. The officers of the Sixtieth Sepoy Regiment had come into Delhi without their men. This corps was under the command of a distinguished soldier, Colonel Thomas Seaton, who had made a name for himself, fifteen years before, as one of the illustrious garrison of Jellalabad. He had believed, as other Sepoy officers had believed, in his men, but they had broken into rebellion at Rohtuck, and had now gone to swell the tide of rebellion within the walls of Delhi. No sooner had they arrived than they went out against us and were amongst the most vehement of our assailants.

June 13—17. Again and again—day after day—the enemy came

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* "The first of these attacks was not serious, but the latter threatened the Mound picquet, and supports of all arms had to be moved up. The First Fusiliers, under Major Jacob, then advanced and drove the mutineers out of the gardens, killing a considerable number of them."—*Norman's Narrative.*

† Major Reid says that, "They went to the front just as if they were going to charge, but no sooner had they closed than, to my horror, I saw them mix up with the enemy and walk off with them. Immediately I saw this I ordered the guns to open upon them, but the wretches were too far off, and I don't think that more than half a dozen were killed."

1857. June 13—17. Renewed attacks.

out to attack our posts with an uniformity of failure of which it would be tedious to recite the details. On the 13th and 15th, they again flung themselves upon our position at Hindoo Rao's House, and, as ever, the Goorkahs and the Guides distinguished themselves by their unflinching gallantry.* On the afternoon of the 17th, we began to act on the offensive. The enemy were strongly posted in the suburbs of Kishen-gunj and Trevelyan-gunj, between our right and the city, and were erecting a battery on rising ground, which would have completely enfiladed the Ridge. So two columns were sent out to destroy their works. It was a dashing enterprise, and Barnard selected the right men for it. One column was entrusted to Reid, the other to Henry Tombs. The former moved from Hindoo Rao's house, the latter from the camp. Both were completely successful. After a gallant resistance by the Sappers and Miners of our old Army, who, after firing their muskets, drew their swords and flung themselves desperately upon us, the battery and magazine were destroyed, and the village in which they were planted was burnt. Large numbers of the enemy were killed and wounded, and their rout was complete. Our own loss was trifling. Tombs, always in the thick of the affray, had two horses shot under him,† and was himself slightly wounded. Captain Brown, of the First Fusiliers,

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* It is said that some regiments newly arrived from Oude took part in these attacks. The Sixtieth was conspicuous in the action of the 13th. Major Reid writes, that they "marched up the Grank Trunk Road in columns of sections right in front, and led the attack headed by the Sirdar Behaudur of the regiment, who made himself very conspicuous, calling out to the men to keep their distance, as he intended to wheel to his left. They fought most desperately. The Sirdar Behaudur was killed by his orderly, Lall Singh. I took the riband of India from his breast and sent it to my wife."

† "Making," at this early stage, writes Major Norman, "five horses that from the commencement of the campaign up to that date had been shot under him."

1857. June 17. well-nigh received his death-wound. That evening General Barnard walked into the Artillery mess-tent, and with characteristic appreciation of gallantry lavished his well-merited praises upon Tombs.

Artillery Practice of the Enemy. There was much, in all this, of the true type of English soldiership. But it was weary and disheartening work at the best. If we lost fewer men than the enemy, they had more to lose, more to spare, and their gaps could be more readily filled. Every victory cost us dearly. And we made no progress towards the great consummation of the capture of Delhi. Every day it became more apparent that we were grievously outmatched in Artillery.* Their guns could take our distance, but ours could not take theirs. They were of heavier metal and longer reach than our own, and sometimes worked with destructive precision. On one occasion (June 17.) a round shot from a twenty-four-pounder was sent crashing into the portico of Hindoo Rao's house, and with such deadly effect that it killed an English officer † and eight men and wounded four others, including a second English subaltern. We could not silence these guns. A twenty-four-pounder had been taken from the enemy in battle, but we had no ammunition in store for a gun of such calibre, and were fain to pick up the shot which had been fired from the city walls. Whilst the ordnance-stores at our command were dwindling down to scarcity-point, so vast were

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* At first our offensive operations were principally confined to shelling the city. "We annoy them excessively with our shells, some of which reach almost to the Palace." But afterwards, perhaps because it was thought that we thus afflicted the townspeople rather than the mutineers, this course was abandoned. "I told you a little while ago that we were firing into the town, but last night there was an order given to fire on the gateways only, not into the town."—*Journal of an Artillery Officer. June* 16.

† Lieutenant Wheatly of the Fifty-fourth Native Infantry, who was doing duty with the Sirmoor Battalion. Among the Goorkhas killed was Tecca Ram, "one of the best shots in the regiment, who had killed twenty-two tigers in the Dhoon."

1857. June.

the supplies in the city, that it little mattered to our assailants how many rounds they fired every hour of the day. The gallantry of the Artillery Subaltern Willoughby had done but little to diminish the resources of the enemy. There were vast supplies of material wealth that could not be blown into the air.

The fire from the Moree bastion, especially, played always annoyingly and sometimes destructively on the Ridge. The Sepoy gunners seemed to take a delight, which was a mixture of humour and savagery, in watching the incidents of our camp, and sending in their shots just at a critical moment to disturb our operations, whether of a military or a social character. If one detachment were marching to the relief of another—if a solitary officer were proceeding to inspect a battery—if a line of cook-boys were toiling on with their caldrons on their heads for the sustenance of the Europeans on picquet, a round shot was sure to come booming towards them, and perhaps with fatal precision of aim. In time our people became accustomed to this exercise, and either avoided the exposure altogether, or kept themselves on the alert so as to anticipate the arrival of the deadly missile, and secure safety by throwing themselves upon the ground. The cook-boys, whose journeys—as men must eat—could not be arrested or postponed, became adepts in this work. They went adroitly down on their knees and deposited their burdens till the danger had passed. The water-carriers, too, were greatly exposed. And it is characteristic of the relations which at that time existed between the two races, that although these servile classes did their duty with all fidelity—and it would have fared ill with us indeed if they had failed us in the hour of need—not only was there little kindliness and sym-

1857. June.

pathy extended towards them, but by some at least of the Englishmen in Camp, these unarmed, harmless, miserable servitors were treated with most unmerited severity. There is something grotesque, but not less terrible for its grotesqueness, in the story that when the cook-boys thus deftly saved themselves from swift death, and secured also their precious burdens, the European soldiers would sometimes say, "It is well for you, my boys, that you have not spilt our dinners.*"

June 18—19. Attack on our rear.

On the 18th, two Sepoy Regiments that had mutinied at Nusserabad streamed into Delhi, bringing with them six guns.† This welcome reinforcement raised the hopes of the mutineers, and they resolved, on the following day, to go out in force against the besiegers. They had so often failed to make an impression on our front, that this time it was their game to attack our position in the rear. So, passing the Subzee-mundee, they entered the gardens on our right, and, disappearing for a while, emerged by the side of the Nujufgurh Canal, to the dismay of the camel-drivers, whose animals were quietly browsing on the plain. The day was then so far spent that the expectation of an attack, which had been entertained in the morning, had passed away from our camp, and we were but ill-prepared to receive the enemy. Our Artillery were the first in action against them. Scott, Money, and Tombs brought their guns into play with marvellous rapidity;‡ but for a while they were unsup-

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* I am writing of this now only with reference to the practice of the enemy in the city. I shall speak more fully hereafter of the treatment of the Natives in camp.

† This reinforcement consisted of the Fifteenth and Thirtieth Sepoy Regiments, the Second Company Seventh Battalion (Golundauze) Artillery, with No. 6 Horse Battery attached, and some men of the First Bombay Light Cavalry.

‡ The Field Artillery employed on this occasion consisted of three guns each of four different batteries, under Turner, Money, Tombs, and Scott. The battle was fought by them.

1857. June 18. Waterloo Day.

ported, and the enemy's fire, artillery and musketry, was heavy and well directed. The guns of the mutineers were the far-famed guns of the illustrious garrison of Jellalabad, known in history as Abbott's battery—guns with the mural crown upon them in honour of their great achievements. The Infantry, too, of the Nusserabad Brigade were proving their title to be regarded as the very flower of the rebel army. So fierce and well directed was the fire of a party of musketeers under cover, that Tombs, seeing his men dropping at their guns, and unable to reach the sheltered enemy, doubted for a little space whether he could maintain himself against them. But in this crisis up rode Daly with a detachment of his Guides' Cavalry, and a word from the heroic Artilleryman sent him forward with a few followers against the musketeers in the brushwood. The diversion was successful; but the gallant leader of the Guides returned severely wounded, and for a while his services were lost to the Force.*

Meanwhile, our Cavalry had been getting to horse, and Yule's Lancers were to be seen spurring into action. But the shades of evening were now falling upon the battle, and ere long it was difficult to distinguish friends from enemies. Yule's saddle was soon empty;† and Hope Grant, who commanded, well-nigh fell into the hands of the enemy, for his charger was

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* The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi" thus describes this incident: "A portion of the Guide Cavalry came up. 'Daly, if you do not charge,' said Tombs to their leader, 'my guns are taken.' Daly spurred into the bushes—scarcely a dozen of his men followed him. He returned with a bullet in his shoulder; but the momentary diversion saved the guns."

† The cotemporary annalists of the siege do not relate in what manner Yule met his death, but his horse galloping riderless into camp seems to have conveyed the first news of his fall, and his body laying all night on the field, it may be assumed that he was killed in the confusion which arose when the brief twilight had closed upon the scene. It is distinctly stated that our own Artillery fired upon the Lancers.

1857. June 18—19. 'shot under him, and it was sore trouble to rescue him in the confusion and darkness of the moment. The engagement, scattered and discursive as were its incidents, is not one easily to be described. A confused narrative of that evening's fighting must be most descriptive of the chaos of the fight. Night fell upon a drawn battle, of which no one could count the issues, and, as our officers met together in their mess-tents, with not very cheerful countenances, they saw the camp-fires of the enemy blazing up in their rear. We had sustained some severe losses. That fine field-officer of the Lancers, Yule, had been killed; Daly, of the Guides, had been incapacitated for active work; Arthur Becher, Quartermaster-General of the Army, had been wounded; and we had left many men upon the field. The enemy had increased in numbers, and with numbers their daring had increased. It would have gone ill with us if the mutineers had succeeded in establishing themselves in our rear, and the strength of the rebel force within the walls had enabled them to renew their attacks on our front and on our flanks. They were welcoming fresh reinforcements every day, whilst our reinforcements, notwithstanding the ceaseless energies of the authorities above and below Delhi, were necessarily coming in but slowly. Perhaps at no period of the siege were circumstances more dispiriting to the besiegers.

There was little sound sleep in our camp that night, but with the first dawn of the morning, and the first breath of the morning air, there came a stern resolution upon our people not to cease from the battle until they had driven the exulting enemy from our rear. But it was scarcely needed that we should brace ourselves up for the encounter. The vehemence of the enemy was seldom of long duration.

1857. June 19.

It expended itself in fierce spasms, often, perhaps, the growth of vast druggings of *bang*, and was generally exhausted in the course of a few hours. On the morning of the 19th, therefore, our people saw but little of the desperate energy of the 18th. Soon after our camp turned out there was another scene of wild confusion. Nobody seemed to know what was the actual position of affairs, and many were quite unable in their bewilderment to distinguish between enemies and friends. The former had nearly all departed, and the few who remained were driven out with little trouble. One last spasm of energy manifested itself in a farewell discharge of round-shot from a Sepoy gun; but the worst that befel us was an amazing panic among the camp-followers beyond the canal, and a considerable expenditure of ammunition upon an imaginary foe.

June 20—21. A lull.

It always happened that after one of these storms of excitement there was a season of calm. To the irresistible voluptuousness of perfect repose the Sepoys ever surrendered themselves on the day after a great fight. The 20th and the 21st were, therefore, days of rest to our Force. The latter was our Sabbath, and early service was performed by Mr. Rotton in the mess-tent of the Second Fusiliers, and afterwards in other parts of the camp. There were many then amongst our people instant in prayer, for they felt that a great crisis was approaching. They may have laughed to scorn the old prophecy that on the centenary of the great battle of Plassey, which had laid Bengal at our feet, and had laid, too, broad and deep the foundations of our vast Anglo-Indian Empire, our empire would be finally extinguished. The self-reliance of the Englishman made light account of such vaticinations; but no one doubted that the superstition

1857. June 22. was strong in the minds of the Delhi garrison, and that the 23rd of June would be a great day, for good or for evil, in the History of the War. It was certain, indeed, that then one of those convulsive efforts, with which already our people were so well acquainted, would be made on a larger scale than ever had been made before. On such a day, warned by the thought of the prophecy which designing people had freely circulated in the Lines of all our rebel regiments, it could not be doubted that Hindoos and Mahomedans would unite with common confidence and common enmity against us, and that an unwonted amount of confidence and *bang* would hurl their regiments against us with unexampled fury and self-devotion, in full assurance of the re-establishment of Native rule from one end of India to the other. Our force had been growing weaker and weaker every day, whilst the rebel force had grown stronger and stronger. It was not, therefore, a very cheerful prospect which lay before the English when they thought of the issues of the morrow.

June 23. The Centenary of Plassey. Day had scarcely broken on the 23rd when our people learnt that their expectations were not unfounded. The enemy, in greater force than had ever menaced us before, streamed out of the Lahore gate, and again moved by our right towards the rear of the British camp. But they encountered an unexpected difficulty, which disconcerted their plans. On the previous night our Sappers had demolished the bridges over the Nujufgurh Drain, by which the enemy had intended to cross their guns; and thus checked, they were compelled to confine their attacks to the right of our position. The effect of this was, that much of the day's fighting was among the houses of the Subzee-mundee, from which the enemy poured in a deadly

1857. June.

fire on our troops. Again and again the British Infantry, with noble courage and resolution, bearing up against the heats of the fiercest sun that had yet assailed them, drove the Sepoys from their cover, and fought against heavy odds all through that long summer day. We had need of all our force in such a struggle, for never had we been more outmatched in numbers, and never had the enemy shown a sterner, more enduring courage. Fresh troops had joined us in the morning, but, weary as they were after a long night's march, they were called into service, and nobly responded to the call.* The action of the 19th had been an Artillery action; this of the 23rd was fought by the Infantry, and it was the fighting that least suits the taste and temper of the English soldier. But the Sixtieth Rifles went gallantly to the attack, and the Goorkahs and Guides vied with them in sturdy, unflinching courage to the last. At noonday the battle was raging furiously in the Subzeemundee; and such were the fearful odds against us, that Reid, cool and confident as he was in the face of difficulty and danger, felt that, if not reinforced, it would strain him to the utmost to hold his own.† But his men fought on; and after a while the reinforcements which he had sent for came up, and then, though the contest was still an unequal one, the

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* These reinforcements consisted of a company of the Seventy-fifth Foot, four companies of the Second Bengal Fusiliers, four European Horse Artillery guns and part of a Native troop, with some Punjabee Infantry and Cavalry—in all about 850 men.

† "The mutineers, about twelve o'clock, made a most desperate attack on the whole of my position. No men could have fought better. They charged the Rifles, the Guides, and my own men again and again, and at one time I thought I must have lost the day. The cannonade from the city, and the heavy guns which they had brought out, raged fast and furious, and completely enfiladed the whole of my position. Thousands were brought against my mere handful of men; but I knew the importance of my position, and was determined to do my utmost to hold it till reinforcements arrived."—*Reid's Letters and Notes.*

1857. June. chances of war were no longer desperately against us, and our stubborn courage prevailed against the multitude of the enemy. As the sun went down, the vigour of the enemy declined also, and at sunset the mutineers had lost heart, and found that the work was hopeless. Before nightfall the Subzee-mundee was our own, and the enemy had withdrawn their guns and retired to the city. It had been a long weary day of hard fighting beneath a destroying sun, and our troops were so spent and exhausted that they could not charge the rebel guns, or follow the retreating masses of the mutineers. It was one of those victories of which a few more repetitions would have turned our position into a graveyard, on which the enemy might have quietly encamped.

June 24. State of affairs in Camp. After this there was another lull, and there was again time for our chief people to take account of the circumstances of their position and to look the future in the face. The result of the fighting on the Centenary of Plassey was somewhat to abate the confidence of the enemy. There were no signs of the descent of that great Star of Fortune which had risen above us for a hundred years. Little now was to be gained by them from spiritual manifestations and encouragements. They had only to look to their material resources; but these were steadily increasing, as the stream of mutiny continued to swell and roll down in full current towards the great ocean of the imperial city. Nusserabad and Jullundhur had already discharged their turbid waters, and now Rohilkund was about to pour in its tributaries. All this was against us, for it was the custom of the enemy upon every new accession of strength to signalise the arrival of the reinforcements by sending them out to attack us. Thus the brunt of the fighting on the 19th had been

1857. June.

borne by the Nusserabad force, and on the 23rd by the regiments from Jullundhur. It was felt, therefore, that on the arrival of the Rohilkund Brigade there would be again a sharp conflict, which, although the issue of the day's fighting could not be doubtful, would tend to the diminution of our strength, and to the exhaustion of our resources, and would place us no nearer to the final consummation for which our people so ardently longed.

Arrival of reinforcements.

On the other hand, however, it was a source of congratulation that our reinforcements were also arriving. Sir John Lawrence was doing his work well in the Punjab, and sending down both European and Sikh troops, and every available gun, to strengthen Barnard in his position before Delhi. The dimensions of the British camp were visibly expanding. The newly arrived troops were at first a little dispirited by the thought of the small progress that had been made by their comrades before Delhi; for the besiegers were found to be the besieged. But they soon took heart again, for the good spirits of the Delhi Field Force were contagious, and nothing finer had ever been seen than the buoyancy and the cheerfulness which they manifested in the midst of all sorts of trials and privations. Many old friends and comrades then met together in the mess-tents to talk over old times, and many new friendships were formed by men meeting as strangers, on that ever-memorable Ridge—friendships destined to last for a life. Hospitality and good-fellowship abounded everywhere. There was not an officer in camp who did not delight in the opportunity of sharing his last bottle of beer with a friend or a comrade. And from the old Crimean General down to the youngest subaltern in camp, all were alike chivalrous, patient, and self-denying.

1857. June.

Last days of General Barnard.

There was never any despondency among them. Vast divergencies of opinion prevailed in camp with respect to the great something that was to be done. Some of the younger, more eager, spirits panted for a rush upon Delhi. The Engineer subalterns—Greathed and his gallant brethren—never ceased to urge the expediency of a *coup-de-main*, and as the month of June wore to a close, Barnard again consented to the enterprise—doubtfully as to the issue, and altogether reluctantly, but with a dominant sense that there was nothing else to be done. He was very active at this time. No subaltern, in the flower of his youth, was more regardless of exposure and fatigue. Under the fierce June sun, never sparing himself, he was continually abroad, and night seldom found his anxious head upon the pillow. Sometimes he and his son laid themselves down together, with revolvers in their hands, but still the general notion in camp was that he "never slept." He was torn to pieces by conflicting counsels. But he wore outwardly a cheerful aspect, and ever resolute to do his best, he bore up manfully against the troubles which surrounded him. Even the feeling that, do what he might, his reputation would be assailed, did not, to outward appearance, very sorely distress him. All men placed in difficult conjunctures must be prepared to encounter reproach, and Barnard well knew it. But ever as time went on he won upon the hearts of the officers under his command by his kindliness and generosity. It was said that he kept open tent; he had a liberal table; and never had an officer in high command a keener sense of individual merit or a more open-hearted desire to bestow his personal commendations on all who had distinguished themselves by acts of gallantry. So, before the month of June was at an end, Sir

Henry Barnard had securely established himself in the affections of the Delhi Field Force. 1857. June 28

But, as weeks passed away, and he saw that he was making no impression upon Delhi, the inward care that was weighing upon his very life grew heavier and heavier. He wrote many letters at this time both to public functionaries in India and to private friends in England, in which he set forth very clearly his difficulties and perplexities, and suggested that he had been, and was likely to be, misjudged. To Sir John Lawrence he wrote, on the 28th of June, a letter, in which he reviewed the Past and set forth the circumstances of the Present. "You have, of course," he said, "been well informed of our proceedings, which, from the commencement, have been a series of difficulties overcome by the determined courage and endurance of our troops, but not leading us to the desired termination. When first I took up this position, my Artillery were to silence the fire of the town from the Moree and Cashmere gates, at *least*, and our heavy guns then brought into play to open our way into the city. So far from this, however, we have not silenced a single gun, and they return us to this day at least four to one. The Chief Artillery Officer admits the distance to be too great; but to get nearer we must look to our Engineers, who are only now commencing to collect some few materials, such as trenching tools, sand-bags, &c., of which they were destitute, and even now have not enough to aid me in strengthening any outpost. In the mean time, my force is being worn out by the constant and sanguinary combats they are exposed to—the attacks which require every soul in my camp to repel—for it is never certain where the enemy intend to strike their blow, and it is only by vigilance I can

1857. June 28. ascertain it, and having done so, withdraw troops from one place to strengthen the threatened one; and thus the men are hastened here and there, and exposed to the sun all day. To me it is wonderful how all have stood it. It is heart-breaking to engage them in these affairs, which always cost us some valuable lives. The Engineers had arranged a plan of approach on the Cashmere side; the difficulties that meet one here are the constant interruptions the operations would experience by the fire from the town, and more so by the more frequent renewal of these dangerous attacks. But a greater one was in store for me when, on inquiring into the means, the amount of siege ammunition was found to be so totally inadequate, that the Chief Engineer declared the project must be abandoned. There remains, therefore, but one alternative. My whole force will be here in a day or two, when our entire project will be matured. Disappointing as, I fear, our progress has been to you, the results of our exertions have been great; an immensely superior force has been on all occasions defeated with great loss, and I have reason to believe that the spirit of this mutineering multitude—contemptible in the open, but as good, if not better, than ourselves behind guns—is completely broken, and that the game is in our hands; for, by confining, or rather centralising the evil on Delhi, the heart of it will be crushed in that spot, and that 'delay,' so far from being detrimental, has been of essential use! But for the prestige, I would leave Delhi to its fate. Anarchy and disorder would soon destroy it; and the force now before it—the only one of Europeans you have in India set free—would be sufficient to re-establish the greater part of the country. To get into Delhi will greatly reduce this small force, and I feel much "moral courage in even hinting at an object which I have no intention of carrying out—at all events, till after an attempt has been made. You may say, why engage in these constant combats? The reason simply is that, when attacked, we must defend ourselves; and that to secure our camp, our hospitals, our stores, &c., every living being has to be employed. The whole thing is too gigantic for the force brought against it. The gates of Delhi once shut, with the whole of your Native Army drilled, equipped, and organised within the walls, a regularly prepared force should have been employed, and the place invested. Much as I value the reduction of Delhi, and great as I see that the danger to my own reputation will be if we fail, still I would rather retire from it than risk this army! But, by God's blessing, all may be saved yet." And in this letter, having set forth the general state of the great question before him, he proceeded to speak of some of its personal bearings. "My position," he said, "is difficult; and not the less so for its undefined responsibilities, which must always be the case when a Commander-in-Chief is in the same field. But the valuable assistance which you have given me, in Brigadier-General Chamberlain, will henceforward greatly lighten my anxieties."

1857.
June.

A few days before—on the 24th of June—Brigadier Chamberlain had arrived in Camp to take the post of Adjutant-General of the Army. His coming had been anticipated with the liveliest emotions of satisfaction. Some said that he would be worth a thousand men. Those who had ever encouraged the bolder and the more hazardous course of action rejoiced most of all, for they believed that his voice would be lifted up in

June 24.
Arrival of Brigadier-General Chamberlain.

1857. June. favour of some dashing enterprise.* It was, doubtless, at that time great gain to have such a man at the elbow of the Commander.† A few months before officialism would have stood aghast at such a selection. Neville Chamberlain had little departmental experience. But the Departments, in that great crisis, were not in the highest honour. Not that they had failed—not that they had done any worse or any better than Departments are wont to do in great conjunctures; but that the Delhi Field Force did not want Departments, but men. There was no want of manliness in the general Staff, for already within the space of three weeks one departmental chief had been killed and another disabled. But it was felt that there were men in the country, cast in the true heroic mould, with a special genius for the work in hand. Some said, "Oh, if Henry Lawrence were but here!" others spoke of John Nicholson as the man for the crisis; and all rejoiced in the advent of Neville Chamberlain. There was another, too, whose name at that time was in the mouth of the general camp. It was known that Baird Smith had been summoned to direct the engineering department, which had been lamentably in want of an efficient chief. All these things were cheering to the heart of the Crimean General, for he mistrusted his own judgment, and he looked eagerly for counsellors in whom he could confide. 1857. July.

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* "Neville Chamberlain has arrived; of this we are all glad, as well as the General. Wilby's bold conceptions may now receive more consideration."—*Greathed's Letters.*—"Everything will be right, they used to say, when Chamberlain comes, and all took courage when they saw his stern pale face."—*History of the Siege of Delhi.*

† "You have sent me a sound, good auxiliary in Brigadier Chamberlain, who fully sees and admits the difficulties I have been placed in. He is favourable to the trial of getting into the place, and a reasonable hope of success may be entertained. I am willing to try, provided I can see my way to honourably secure my sick and wounded, and keeping open my supplies."—*Sir H. Barnard to Sir John Lawrence, July 1. MS. Correspondence.*

Colonel Baird Smith.

Baird Smith was at Roorkhee, leading an active, busy life, thinking much of the Army before Delhi, but never dreaming of taking part in the conflict, when, in the last week of June, news reached him that he was wanted there to take the place of the Chief Engineer, who had completely broken down. Having improvised, with irregular despatch, a body of some six hundred Pioneers, and loaded fifty or sixty carts with Engineer tools and stores, he started on the 29th of June, accompanied by Captains Robertson and Spring.* Pushing on by forced marches, he was within sixty miles of Delhi, when, on the morning of the 2nd of July, after a weary night-march, an express reached him with the stirring news that an assault on Delhi had been planned for the early dawn of the morrow, and that all were anxious for his presence. After an hour or two of sleep, he mounted again, and rode—or, as he said, "scrambled"—on; getting what he could to carry him—now a fresh horse, now an elephant, and again the coach-and-four of the Rajah of Jheend; and so, toiling all through the day and the night, he reached Delhi by three o'clock on the morning of the 3rd. Weary and worn out though he was, the prospect of the coming assault braced him up for the work in hand; but he had made the toilsome march for nothing. The projected attack was in abeyance, if it had not wholly collapsed.

Postponement of the Assault.

It was the old story: that fatal indecision, which had been the bane of General Barnard, as leader of such an enterprise as this, had again, at the eleventh

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* The latter was going to join his regiment in the Punjab. On the morning of his arrival at Jhelum he was killed in an attack on the Native troops that had broken into mutiny in that place.

1857. July 3. hour, overthrown the bolder counsels which he had been persuaded to adopt. All the expected reinforcements had arrived, and he was stronger than he had ever been before.* The details of the assault had been arranged; the plans had been prepared; the troops had been told off for the attacking columns, though they had not yet been warned, and the project was kept a secret in Camp—when information reached him that the enemy were contemplating a grand attack upon our position by the agency of the rebel regiments recently arrived from Rohilkund. The time of early morning appointed for the assault—a little before daybreak—would have been propitious, for the hour before dawn was dark and cloudy, and our troops could have advanced unseen to the City walls. But now the opportunity was lost. The time was coming for "the moon and day to meet," and so all hope of our creeping up, unseen, beneath the shadow of the darkness, was passing away. What Barnard and others called the "Gamester's Throw," was not destined to be thrown by him.†

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* The reinforcements which had joined our Camp from the Punjab between the 26th of June and 3rd of July were the Head-quarters of Her Majesty's Eighth Foot, released by the defection of the Jullundhur Brigade; the Head-quarters of Her Majesty's Sixty-first Foot; the First Regiment of Punjab Infantry (Coke's Rifles); a squadron of Punjab Cavalry; with two guns of European and two of Native Horse Artillery; some European Reserve Artillery, and some Sikh gunners. The want of artillerymen to work our guns had been severely felt, and Sir John Lawrence had done his best to supply them from all sources. The reinforcements detached above made up, according to Norman, our effective force to six thousand six hundred men of all arms.

† The causes of the abandonment of the enterprise were thus stated by Sir H. Barnard: "I had all prepared for the *gamester's throw* last night, when the arrival of the reinforcements of Coke's gave me all the available means I can expect. It was frustrated, first, by hearing that we were to be attacked in great force this morning at dawn of day, when to a certainty our Camp would be destroyed; and, secondly, on account of serious disaffection in (Charles) Nicholson's Regiment, all the Hindoos of which I have disarmed—and hung two of the Na-

1857. July 4. The Bareilly Brigade.

The threatened attack on our position, said to have been fixed for the morning of the 3rd, was not then developed into a fact; but at night the Rohilkund Brigade*—some four thousand or five thousand strong, Horse, Foot, and Artillery—the Infantry in the scarlet uniforms of their old masters—went out, under cover of the darkness, and made their way towards Alipore, in rear of our Camp, with some vague intention of cutting off our communications by destroying a post we had established there, and of intercepting some convoys on their way to or from the Ridge.† A force under Major Coke, of the Punjab Irregular Army, who had arrived in Camp on the last day of June, was sent out to give battle to the mutineers. It was a compact, well-appointed column of Cavalry and Infantry, with some Horse Artillery guns; and the leader was held in repute for his achievements in border warfare. But the result was a disappointment. The ground was marshy; the progress was slow; and we were too late to do the work. Soon after daybreak on the 4th, our column came in sight of the Sepoy Regiments which were then returning from Alepore, and our guns were brought into action. But Coke had not taken

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tive officers. The Ninth Irregulars evinced evident sign of '*shake*,' and as they numbered some four hundred and fifty, it became a serious question to leave all these natives in my Camp, when all my own forces were employed elsewhere. Chamberlain admits that few men were ever placed in a more painfully responsible position. If I lose this small force, it will be felt all over the Punjab, and yet, if I do not take Delhi, the result will be equally disastrous. It will be a good deed when done!—and I will take care and do it, with every chance in my favour, in good will."—*Sir Henry Barnard to Sir John Lawrence, July 3, 1869. MS. Correspondence.*

* The Rohilkund, or Bareilly, Brigade marched in on the 1st and 2nd of July. It consisted of the Eighteenth, Twenty-eighth, Twenty-ninth, and Sixty-eighth Infantry Regiments; the Eighth Irregular Cavalry, No. 15 Horse Battery, and two 6-pounder post guns from Shahjehanpore.

† The enemy expected to find a convoy of wounded men going from our Camp to Umballah, and another with treasure and ammunition coming from Ferozepore. But he fortunately missed both of them.

1857. July.

right on account of the distance; our light field pieces made little impression upon the enemy, and our Infantry had not come up in time to take part in the engagement. The Sepoy General, Bukht Khan, was, however, in no mood to come to closer quarters with us, so he drew off his forces and set his face towards Delhi, leaving behind him his baggage, consisting mainly of the night's plunder—an ammunition waggon and some camel-loads of small-arm cartridges. But they carried off all their guns, and returned to garrison not much weaker than when they started. "The distance we had come from Camp," wrote General Reed to Sir John Lawrence, "and the deep state of the ground, prevented our guns and cavalry from pursuing. In fact, the horses were knocked up, and the guns could scarcely be moved, while the enemy, being on higher ground, managed to get away their guns."* But if we had gained no glory, the enemy had added another to their long list of failures. They had taken out some thousands of their best troops, and had only burnt a village, plundered a small isolated British post, and left the plunder behind them on the field. But, if our eyes had not been opened before to the danger of some day having our rearward communications with Kurnaul and the Punjab—all the upper country from which we drew our supplies and reinforcements—interrupted by a swarming enemy, who might attack us at all points

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* *MS. Correspondence.*—The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi," who was obviously with Coke's force, adds: "Our men returned completely exhausted by the heat. Indeed, many of the Sixty-first sank down beneath trees, and our elephants had to be sent from Camp to carry them in."—Hodson says that "our loss was about thirty or forty Europeans, and three of my Native officers temporarily disabled." Another writer (*MS. Journal*) says: "Our loss was one Irregular, who came from the Punjab with Coke, and an Artillery driver."

1857. July.

at the same time, so as to prevent us from effectively protecting our rear, this expedition of the Rohilkund force dispersed all the films that still obscured our vision. And our Engineer officers, therefore, were directed to adopt every possible measure to render the establishment of the enemy in our rear a feat of difficult, if not impossible, accomplishment; and the chief of these was the destruction of the bridges across the Nujufgurh Canal, except the one immediately in our rear, which we could always command and protect.

Very soon Baird Smith and Barnard were in close consultation. The General rejoiced greatly in the presence of his new adviser, and gave him his unstinted confidence. The arrival, indeed, of such a man as the accomplished Engineer, who knew every nook and crevice in Delhi, and who, before he had any expectation of being personally connected with the siege, had devised a plan of attack, was great gain to the besieging force; and Barnard, whose ignorance of Indian warfare and mistrust of his own judgment drove him to seek advice in all likeliest quarters, would gladly have leant most trustingly on Smith. But it was not decreed that he should trust in any one much longer. His life was now wearing to a close.

Death of General Barnard.

On the second day after Baird Smith's arrival in Camp, cholera fell heavily upon the General, and smote him down with even more than its wonted suddenness. General Reed had seen Barnard in the early morning, and observed nothing peculiar about him; but by ten o'clock on that Sunday morning a whisper was running through the camp that the Commander of the Delhi Field Force was dying. July 5.

1857. July 5. He had been missed from his accustomed place at church-service; and, before many hours had passed, his broken-hearted son, who had ministered to him with all the tenderness of a woman, was standing beside his lifeless body. "Tell them," said the dying General, speaking of his family in England, almost with his last breath—"tell them that I die happy." Next day his remains were conveyed on a gun-carriage to their last resting-place. "The only difference," wrote the Chaplain who performed the burial-service, "between the General and a private soldier consisted in the length of the mournful train, which followed in solemn silence the mortal remains of the brave warrior."

From his death-bed he had sent a message to Baird Smith, saying that he trusted to him to give such an explanation of the circumstances in which he was placed as would save his reputation as a soldier. And, indeed, the same generosity of feeling as he had evinced in all his endeavours to brighten the character of his dead friend Anson was now displayed by others towards him; for all men spoke and wrote gently and kindly of Barnard, as of one against whom nothing was to be said except that circumstances were adverse to him. "I found him," wrote Baird Smith, "one of the most loveable men I had ever met—rigidly conscientious in every duty, a perfect gentleman in manner and feeling, a brave soldier, but unequal to the present crisis from an apparent want of confidence in himself and an inability to discriminate between the judgments of others."—"In him," wrote General Reed to Sir John Lawrence, "the service has lost a most energetic and indefatigable officer, and I fear his untimely end was in a great measure to be attributed to his fearless exposure of himself, not only to the fire of the enemy, but to the more deadly rays of the sun."—"He was a high-minded, excellent officer," said Mr. Commissioner Greathed; "and on European ground, in a European war, would have done the State good service; but he was too suddenly thrust into the most difficult active service in India that could be imagined, and found himself placed in command of an Army which General Anson had organised, and obliged to carry out operations which he would not himself have undertaken with the means at his command. With more knowledge of the relative merits of his troops and of the enemy, he would, I think, have achieved a great success."—"How he has carried on so long," wrote Neville Chamberlain, "is wonderful. All day in the sun, and the most part of the night either walking up and down the main street of the camp or visiting the batteries and posts. His constitution was such that he could not command sleep at the moments when he might have rested, and exhausted nature has given way. We all deeply lament his loss, for a kinder or more noble-minded officer never lived." 1857. July 5.

I need add nothing to these tributes from the foremost officers in the Camp. Only three months before Barnard had written to Lord Canning, saying: "Cannot you find some tough job to put to me? I will serve you faithfully."* The "tough job" had been found, and a single month of it had sufficed to lay him in his grave. But he had redeemed his promise. He had served the State faithfully to the last hour of his life.

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* *Ante*, vol. i., page 563. Some further extracts from Barnard's Correspondence will be found in the Appendix.

1857. July.

And here fitly closes the second part of this Story of the Siege of Delhi. It is the story of a succession of profitless episodes—desultory in narration as in fact; the story of a month's fighting with no results but loss of life, waste of material resources, and bitter disappointment in all the dwelling-places of the English in India, as week after week passed away, and every fresh report of the fall of Delhi was proved to be a mockery and a lie.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL REED IN COMMAND—EXERTIONS OF BAIRD SMITH—INADEQUACY OF RESOURCES—QUESTION OF ASSAULT RENEWED—ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE ENEMY—HOPES OF THE ENGLISH—ASSAULT ABANDONED—DEPARTURE OF GENERAL REED—BRIGADIER WILSON IN COMMAND—HIS POSITION AND EFFORTS—SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE CAMP—STATE OF THE DELHI GARRISON.

July, 1857.

Question of Materials for a Siege.

FROM the first hour of his appearance at Delhi, Baird Smith had begun to examine thoroughly the means and resources at his disposal. He had no great opinion of the power of the place to stand a siege, if the besiegers had adequate material for its prosecution. But never was a besieging army in worse plight for the conduct of great operations than the British Army before Delhi. The Chief Engineer found that his siege ordnance consisted of two 24-pounders, nine 18-pounders, six 8-inch mortars, and two or three 8-inch howitzers. The enemy were much stronger in Artillery. They could bring to any point open to attack from twenty-five to thirty guns, and ten or twelve mortars—all as well served as our own. But there was something even worse than this. If we had possessed more guns we could not have used them, for there was a deplorable want of ammunition. Baird Smith stood aghast at the discovery that the shot in store for the heavy guns was scarcely equal to the requirements of a day's siege, and there was no immediate prospect of the receipt of further supplies; whilst, on the other

1857. July.

hand, the enemy were furnished with the inexhaustible resources of the great Delhi Magazine. It was plain, therefore, that in this helpless state it would have been madness to commence siege operations, which must have been speedily abandoned from the exhaustion of our material supplies.

Question of Assault.

But the question still suggested itself: "Might not the place be carried by assault?" It was easier to answer this in the affirmative. "Here," he argued, "the relative forces are materially changed in value. We have a highly disciplined body under a single head, completely in hand, full of pluck, and anxious to attack, and with almost unlimited self-reliance. The enemy is without any head, not in hand at all, so far broken in spirit that he has never met us in battle—with any odds in his favour—without being beaten. It is very true that his numbers much exceed ours, and that in a town, in street-fighting, discipline is of less value than in the open battle-field. It is true, also, that assaults are proverbially precarious. Napoleon said of them, 'a dog or a goose may decide their issues.' The results of failure would be as terrible and depressing as those of success would be glorious and inspiriting."* All these things he deliberately considered; but, weighing the chances on either side, he came to the conclusion that "the probabilities of success were far greater than those of failure, and the reasons justifying an assault stronger than those which justified inaction." He therefore urged upon the General, in an official letter, the advantages of an assault by escalade, the gates which we desired to force being blown in by powder-bags. "And," he wrote, four months afterwards, "looking back now with the full advantages of actual ex-

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* MS. Correspondence of Colonel Baird Smith.

1857. July.

perience, and with, I believe, very little disposition to maintain a foregone conclusion, because it was foregone, I think at this moment, if we had assaulted any time between the 4th and 14th of July, we should have carried the place."*

General Reed

When the Engineer's letter reached the Head-Quarters of the Force, Sir Henry Barnard was dead, or dying.† The command was then assumed by General Reed. Since he had been in the Delhi Camp, with no immediate responsibility upon him, his health had improved; and although he still appeared to others, especially to men with the inexhaustible energies of Baird Smith, a feeble invalid, he believed himself to be equal to the work, and wrote that, "with the aid of the Almighty, he trusted to carry it to a successful issue." To this officer Baird Smith's plan of assault was submitted. He did not immediately reject it. On the 9th, he wrote to Sir John Lawrence, saying, "We still have the assault in contemplation, the details of which are not yet quite completed by the Engineers' Department under Baird Smith." But the delay, whether originating in the Engineers' Department, or in the councils of the General, was fatal to the scheme; and, as Baird Smith afterwards wrote, "the opportunity passed away, and the question of assault or no assault finally resolved itself into doing nothing by sheer

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* MS. Correspondence of Colonel Baird Smith.

† I have here again to notice the confusion of dates, of which I have spoken in a former note. Baird Smith, in a letter before me, says, "My letter recommending the measure went in on the 6th. I doubt if Sir Henry Barnard ever saw it, as he died a day or two afterwards." But Mr. Greathed, in a letter dated July 6, says that the remains of the General were buried at ten o'clock on that day; and Mr. Rotton (*Chaplain's Narrative*), who performed the funeral service, says most distinctly that Barnard died at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, July 5. There is not the least doubt of the fact. Baird Smith's letter, therefore, was not sent in until after Barnard's death, unless he is wrong about the date of its despatch.

1857. July.

force of circumstances." "Whatever is," he added, "being best, I am content with things as they are, and I am very far indeed from attaching the slightest blame to those who differed from me on the question of assaulting. They, doubtless, examined the probabilities as conscientiously as I did, but realised them differently, and came to a contrary conclusion. The difficulties were great enough, and the consequences grave enough, to require every man to form and to hold to his own opinion, and yet to promote toleration at differences—at any rate, that was my view of the case, right or wrong." And, truly, it was very right. For there is nothing, perhaps, which calls for more toleration than the solution of great military questions, when there are antagonistic arrays of difficulties to be considered. It has been said of other places than Delhi, which have stood protracted sieges, that they might have been carried by assault within the first hour of our appearance before them. It was said of Bhurtpore; it was said of Sebastopol; but neither Combermere nor Raglan thought that it was his duty to risk the chance of a failure by attempting it.

Action of July 9.

The circumstances, the force of which was said by the Chief Engineer to have settled the momentous question of assault or no assault, were these. Whilst in the English Camp our people were considering the best means of attacking the enemy within the walls of Delhi, the enemy were making renewed attacks on the British Camp outside the walls; and every new attack reduced our scanty numbers. On the 9th of July they came out in force against us. Intelligence of their design reached General Reed in the morning, and he was in some measure prepared for them; but he scarcely expected a daring inroad of rebel Cavalry into our Camp.[*] But about ten o'clock,[†] through a mist of heavy rain, our English officers, on the "Mound" discerned their approach. Here, on a piece of elevated ground to the right rear of our Camp, was planted a battery of three heavy guns, with the usual Infantry Picquet. In addition to this a Cavalry Picquet was thrown out, somewhat in advance of the Mound; and this now consisted of a party of Carabineers, two Horse Artillery guns of Tombs's troop, and a detachment of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, under a Native officer, which occupied the extreme point in advance.[‡] Perplexed by 1857. July 9.

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[*] "We had a sharp affair with the enemy yesterday. I had received a report in the morning that they were coming out in force on the right, and Major Reid applied for their usual reinforcement at Hindoo Rao's house, which was sent, and the rest of the troops held in readiness to turn out. About ten A.M. a party of insurgent Sowars made a most daring inroad to the rear of our right by a road leading to the Grand Trunk. These men were dressed exactly like the Ninth Irregulars, which led to the supposition that part of that regiment, which was on picquet on that flank, had mutinied; but it turned out that the greater part of them, at least, belonged to the Eighth Irregulars from Bareilly. About a hundred men of their people actually swept through the right of our camp by the rear, by the bridge adjoining the burial-ground."—*General Reed to Sir John Lawrence, July* 10, 1857. *MS.*

[†] It will have been seen that, in the preceding note, General Reed says that the enemy appeared about ten o'clock. Major Reid says, "the action commenced about seven o'clock." The latter may refer to the opening of the enemy's guns. Major Tombs says that, to the best of his recollection, it was about three P.M. when he first learnt that the troopers were entering our Camp. Cotemporary accounts often differ greatly with respect to the time of day.

[‡] "The Mound was about halfway between the Ridge and the Canal, which protected the British rear. It was on the right rear flank of Camp, and overlooked the Subzee-mundee. Between the Mound and the Canal there were several clumps of trees, and the Canal-bank being also fringed with them, the view in that direction was confused and interrupted, and for this reason a Cavalry picquet was thrown out on the Canal-bank, somewhat in advance of the Mound, from which, however, the videttes of the Cavalry picquet were visible. . . . The guns and Carabineers were not stationed on the Mound, but at the foot of and on the right flank of it, so that facing to their proper front—the Subzee-mundee—the Mound was on their left hand and the Canal on their right. The ground on the right of the picquet was somewhat elevated, and on this the tents of the men were pitched and the Cavalry horses picqueted. The guns were, as it were, in a hollow, with the Mound on their left and the elevated ground on the right. To their front was a small breastwork, to which it was ordered that the guns should be run up and fought behind in case of an attack, and until the picquet could be reinforced."—*MS. Memorandum.*

1857. July. the appearance of the familiar uniform of the Irregular Cavalry of our own Picquets, our people at first thought that they had been driven in by the advance of the enemy; and so the guns, which might have opened upon them, were pointed harmlessly at the troopers.* But there was something much worse than this. The mistake of the British Artillery was followed by the disgrace of the British Cavalry. As the Irregulars of the Eighth from Delhi swept on, the detachment of Carabineers, which formed a part of the Picquet, turned and fled. Stillman, who commanded them, remained alone at his post. The first error was soon discovered. Hills, who was in charge of the artillery—two horse-artillery guns—of the Picquet, saw presently that it was a hostile attack, and ordered out his guns for action. But the enemy were upon him; he had not time to open fire. In this emergency the dashing Artillery subaltern—a man of light weight and short stature, young in years, but with the coolness of a veteran and the courage of a giant—set spurs to his horse and rushed into the midst of the advancing troopers, cutting right and left at them with good effect, until two of them charged him at the same time, and by the shock of the collision, both horse and rider were thrown violently to the ground. Regaining his feet after his assailants had passed on, he recovered his sword in time to renew the combat with three Sowars, two mounted and one on foot. The two first he cut down,* and then engaged the third, a young, active swordsman of good courage, who came fresh to the encounter, whilst Hills, scant of breath and shaken by his fall, had lost all his first strength, but none of his first courage. The heavy cloak, too, which he wore, as a protection against the rain, dragged at his throat, and well-nigh choked him. The chances were now fearfully against him. Twice he fired, but his pistol snapped, and then he cut at his opponent's shoulder. The blow did not take effect; and the trooper, watching his opportunity, clutched at the English subaltern's sword and wrested it from him. Hills then closed with his enemy, grappled him so that he could not strike out with the sabre, and smote him with clenched fist again and again on the face, until the Englishman slipped and fell to the ground. 1857. July 9.

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* The actual assailants were troopers of the Eighth Irregular Cavalry, who had mutinied at Bareilly; but it was more than suspected that the men of the Ninth were cognisant of and favoured the attack. It has been seen (*Note, ante*, page 565) that General Barnard had been very doubtful of their fidelity. There had been many desertions from their ranks, but no signs of open mutiny. It may be stated here that after this affair of the 9th of July, the regiment was quietly moved out of Camp, apparently on duty. "On the 11th of July the Head-Quarters of the Regiment proceeded to Alipore, for the purpose of keeping open the communication with the rear. Large detachments were sent into the divisions of Sâharunpore, Soneput, and Paneput. On the 21st of July, in consequence of a large desertion from the Soneput detachment, it was deemed advisable to march the regiment back towards the Punjab."—*Parliamentary Return of Regiments that have Mutinied.* A wing of the Ninth Irregular had accompanied the first siege-train to Delhi (*ante*, page 189), and the other (Head-Quarters) wing had joined our Camp on the 2nd of July.

The "Mound" was a favourite place of gathering in Camp. It commonly happened that many of our officers were to be seen there, watching the progress of events below, or discussing the operations of the siege. But the heavy rain of the 9th of July had driven our people to the shelter of their tents. Among others, Major Tombs was in the Artillery Mess-Tent—one of the cheeriest places in Camp—when a trooper of the Ninth Irregular Cavalry, in a state of high excitement, rode up and asked the way

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* "The first I wounded and dropped him from his horse; the second charged me with a lance. I put it aside, and caught him an awful gash on the head and face. I thought I had killed him; apparently he must have clung to his horse, for he disappeared. The wounded man then came up, but got his skull split."—*Hills' Narrative.*

1587. July 9. to the General's quarters. In reply to a question from Tombs, he said that the enemy were showing in front of our picquets; but the man's words seemed but scantly to express all that was in him, so Tombs hurried to his own tent, took his sword and revolver, and ordering his horse to be brought after him, walked down to the Mound Picquet. As he approached the post, he saw the Carabineers drawn up in mounted array, and our guns getting ready for action. In a minute there was a tremendous rush of Irregular Horse, the troopers brandishing their swords and vociferating lustily; and then there was to be seen the sad spectacle of our Dragoons broken and flying to the rear, whilst one of our guns went right-about, some of the horses mounted and some riderless, and galloped towards our Camp. Tombs was now in the midst of the enemy, who were striking at him from all sides, but with no effect. A man of a noble presence, tall, strong, of robust frame and handsome countenance, dark-haired, dark-bearded, and of swart complexion, he was, in all outward semblance, the model of a Feringhee warrior; and the heroic aspect truly expressed the heroic qualities of the man. There was no finer soldier in the Camp. Threading his way adroitly through the black horsemen, he ascended the Mound, and looking down into the hollow, where his two guns had been posted, he saw the remaining one overturned, the horses on the ground, struggling in their harness or dead, with some slain or wounded gunners beside them. Near the gun he saw the prostrate body of Hills, apparently entangled in his cloak, with a dismounted Sowar standing over him with drawn sword, about to administer the death-stroke. At this time Tombs was some thirty paces from his friend. He could not hope to reach the enemy in time to cut him down with the sabre, so resting his revolver on his left arm, he took steady aim at the trooper, who was turned full-breasted towards him, and shot him through the body. The blood oozed out through the white tunic of the wounded rebel, and, for a while at least, Hills was saved. 1857. July 9.

But the danger was not yet passed. Tombs helped his fallen subaltern to rise, and together they ascended the slope of the Mound. As they were watching the movements of the enemy, they saw a little way beneath them another dismounted Sowar, who was walking away with Hills' revolver in his hand. They made at once towards him. He was a young, strong, active trooper, who turned and attacked them with his sword, as one well skilled in the use of the weapon. His first blow aimed at Hills was parried. Then he struck at Tombs, who with like address guarded the cut. But the third blow, struck with despairing energy, as he sprung upon the younger of his opponents, broke down Hills' guard, and clove the skull to the brain. In a moment he had turned upon Tombs, who coolly parried the blow and drove his sword right through the trooper's body.*

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* This narrative differs from some of the published versions of this incident, and, in one respect at least, from the account (quoted above) written by Hills himself, and printed at the time in the English journals. Hills says that the Sowar with whom he and Tombs had the second encounter was the very man who had attacked him in the first instance, and from whom his friend had saved him. "When we got down," he says, "I saw the very man Tombs had saved me from moving off with my pistol (he had only been wounded, and shammed dead). I told Tombs, and we went at him." But it is the assured belief of Tombs, who saw the first trooper fall, and the blood streaming from the man's chest over his white tunic, that their second antagonist was "another dismounted Sowar." *Cæteris paribus*, there would seem to be more reason to accept Tombs's version than that of his subaltern, as the circumstances of the former were more favourable to cool and accurate observation. And I would rather believe this version, as the one that best illustrates the

1857. July 9. Meanwhile, the Sowars, flushed with their first success, were sweeping onwards through our picquets, to the main street of our Camp. What could account for the rout of the Carabineers—what could explain the flight of the Horse Artillery?* The utmost confusion prevailed. Our people turned out in excited haste, not knowing what it all portended. The road which the rebel-troopers had taken led to the Artillery Lines. There was a Native troop of Horse Artillery there under Major Renny; and the Sowars called upon them to fraternise with their party, and to march back with them to Delhi. The loyal natives sternly replied that they obeyed only their own officers. Near them was Henry Olpherts' European troop, unlimbered and ready for immediate action. The black troop was between them and the enemy; but the Native gunners called upon the white troopers to fire through their bodies. There was no need for this. The whole camp was now astir. For a little while the Sowars had profited by the uncertainty and perplexity in our Camp. But

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splendour of the achievement. If the same Sowar were the hero of both combats, he assuredly well earned by that morning's fighting the Behaudur-Shah Cross for personal bravery. I should not omit to add that it has been recorded that "Tombs's account of the affair of the 9th, when the enemy's Horse rode through our Camp, was torn up by Colonel Mackenzie. He had omitted to say a word about himself, so Mackenzie gave the General the true version."—*Greathed's Letters.* Both Tombs and Hills were deservedly rewarded with the Victoria Cross.

* It seems to have been a question among earlier writers whether the artillery on picquet duty did run away; but there can be no doubt of the fact. In a letter written from Camp on the same day, an artillery officer, describing what he saw, says: "A gun of the Horse Artillery, that had been on picquet on our right, had just retreated into Camp, into our main street, close to my tent." The statement of Major (Sir Henry) Tombs, as embodied in the text, is quite conclusive on the subject. With respect to the flight of the Carabineers, General Reed writes: "In the confusion, I am sorry to say a detachment of the Carabineers, who were escorting the guns, gave way, in spite of the endeavours of their officers to stop them. These men I propose to dismount as a disgrace to them. It would appear that they are composed mostly of recruits, and, being mounted on half-broken horses, do not know how to manage them."—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. July 9.

their triumph was soon turned to defeat, and they fled back to Delhi, leaving many of these audacious rebels behind them, including the originator of the perilous exploit.* That so many of them escaped unscathed, returning by the way they had come, is not to be accounted for, except on the ground of surprise and confusion. Acts of individual gallantry are recorded—none more lustrous than those scored up to the honour of the brave artillerymen, Renny and Fagan.† But some dark clouds overshadowed the scene. It is related that in the absence of tangible enemies, some of our soldiery, who turned out on this occasion, butchered a number of unoffending camp-followers, servants, and others, who were huddling together, in vague alarm, near the Christian churchyard. No loyalty, no fidelity, no patient good service, on the part of these poor people, could extinguish for a moment the fierce hatred which possessed our white soldiers against all who wore the dusky livery of the East.

Affairs in the Subzee-mundee.

This bold incursion of Irregulars into our Camp did not supply all the day's fighting. All through the morning a brisk cannonade had been maintained by the enemy, and answered by our guns on the Right. It was soon apparent, however, that the

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* "They were at first supposed to be the Ninth, but, being discovered, were charged by Brigadier Grant with his Lancers, and Captain Hodson with the Guides, who drove them out of Cantonments."—*General Reed to Sir John Lawrence. MS. Correspondence.* This, however, as regards Hodson's part in the expulsion of the enemy, is erroneous. Hodson started in pursuit with the Guides, mistook the enemy for our own people, and rode some three miles parallel to them, until they suddenly crossed a bridge and "galloped off to Delhi."—*See Greathed's and Hodson's Letters.*

† Renny is said to have shot several of the rebel troopers with his revolver. Fagan rushed out of his tent with only a pen in his hand, got together a few men, killed fifteen of the enemy, and returned with a sword and Minie rifle, of which he had "eased" a Ressaldar of the Irregulars.—*Norman's Narrative,—Greathed's Letters.—History of the Siege of Delhi.*

1857. July 9. rebel musketeers were as active as their gunners. A body of Sepoys had posted themselves in the suburb of the Subzee-mundee, where, screened and aided by houses and walled gardens, and other enclosures, they kept up a galling fire on our picquets. This could not be endured; so a column was formed to attack and dislodge them. It consisted of the Head-Quarters and two companies of the Sixtieth Rifles, detachments of the Eighth and Sixty-first Foot, and the Fourth Sikh Infantry, with the six guns of Major Scott's battery; whilst Major Reid was instructed to co-operate with them with such men as could be spared from the Main Picquet. Commanded by General Chamberlain, our column swept through the Subzee-mundee, and was soon in close conflict with the Insurgents. Posted as they were, and often firing down upon us from some elevated structure, it was not easy to dislodge them. The fighting was of the kind most distasteful and most destructive to our British soldiery. But their stubborn courage prevailed at last. The work was done thoroughly;* but such thorough work always was done by us, at heavy cost to our ever-decreasing force. We could ill spare at that time a single fighting man; but the cotemporary historians relate that more than two hundred of our people were killed or disabled on that 9th of July.† And so the chances of a successful assault upon the city began to dwindle into a certainty of failure; and those who had urged it with

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* "Eventually everything was effected that was desired, our success being greatly aided by the admirable and steady practice of Major Scott's battery under a heavy fire—eleven men being put 'hors de combat' out of its small complement."—*Norman.*

† The number stated is two hundred and twenty-three, including one officer killed and eight wounded. The officer killed was Captain Mountsteven, of the Eighth. There was heavy carnage in the enemy's ranks.

1857. July 9. the greatest confidence, now had their misgivings.* It is true that the carnage among the enemy had been far greater than in our ranks; but they had never been numerically stronger than at that time, and the heaps of dead which they left behind them diminished but little the vital resources of that enormous garrison.

Action of July 14. And, a few days afterwards, this question of assault, as Baird Smith wrote, had finally "resolved itself into nothing by sheer force of circumstances;" for there was another hard fight, and another long list of casualties. On the 14th the enemy again came out in force to the attack of our position on the Right. It was said that they had vowed to carry our batteries, and destroy that formidable picquet at Hindoo Rao's house, which had sent the message of death to so many of their comrades. Becher's spies had gained intelligence of the movement, and Reid had been warned of the coming onslaught. He was quite ready for them, and said, laughingly, that they had attacked him and been beaten nineteen times, and that he did not expect to be worsted on the twentieth. The attack commenced about eight o'clock in the morning. For some time our people stood on the defensive, keeping the mutineers at bay. Both forces were under cover, and little execution was done. But when the sun was going down, Neville Chamberlain saw that the time had come to resort to other measures. So despatching a letter to Reid, desiring him to be prepared to attack the enemy, and act in concert with him, he sent Showers with another column, consisting of detachments of the First Euro-

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* See letters of Hervey Greathed. Writing on the 10th, he says: "It may now be prudent to defer the attack for a short time, for at this moment they (the enemy) may be considered in the plenitude of their force," &c. &c.

1857. July 14. peans, the 75th Queen's, Coke's Rifles, and Hodson's Horse, with six Horse Artillery guns under Turner and Money, to take them in flank. The walled gardens, and other places of shelter, in which the mutineers had posted themselves, were now to be cleared; and it was a fine thing to see our columns sweeping down upon the enemy, Reid's little Goorkhas setting up a ringing cheer, and every man panting eagerly for the affray. Then two of our great Punjabee warriors were to be seen ever in the thickest of the fight. Where danger threatened most, Chamberlain and Hodson were sure to be seen. The enemy were driven from point to point, in confused flight, clean out of their sheltering walls; and the more impetuous of their assailants pushed on after them along the main road, within the fire from the walls of Delhi. There was it that Chamberlain, fearlessly exposing himself, according to his wont, well-nigh met his death-wound. A party of the enemy, covered by a low wall, had made a stand, and were pouring in a destructive fire upon our advancing soldiery, which made them for a moment recoil, when the Adjutant-General, setting spurs to his horse, called upon the men to follow him, and cleared the enclosure. He was gallantly supported; but a musket-ball took effect upon him, and broke his left arm below the shoulder.* Our people were then so near the city walls that the pursuit became disastrous. For the enemy gathered fresh courage, and rallied before their defences, whilst the hot haste with which we had pushed on to chastise the mutineers was throwing confusion into our ranks. The management of the pursuing force was not equal to the gallantry of the pursuit. At one point we had driven the mutineers from their guns, but we were not prepared to take advantage of their desertion. Hodson's quick eye marked the opportunity, and he was eager to charge the battery. But the men upon whom he called to aid him were exhausted, and at the moment there was no response. It is always, in such straits, a question of moments. Seeing that there was hesitation, a Sepoy gunner applied the port-fire to a piece loaded with grape; and before the smoke had cleared away the guns had been limbered up, and the opportunity was lost for ever. 1857. July 14.

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* It was thought at first to be a gun-shot wound. A cotemporary letter says: "Chamberlain was brought in with a sorely shattered arm. His impression was that he had been struck by grape, which was being showered on them from the city walls. He bore his wound and his pain nobly, with a high cheerful courage, but getting out of the narrow dooley was too much for him, and as he leant on two or three people he stumbled forward and fell, almost on the shattered limb."

Again the old story was repeated. We had gained a profitless, perhaps, indeed, a dubious victory, at a loss of two hundred men, killed or disabled.* The finest soldier in the Camp, foremost in reputation, foremost ever in action, and all but first in official position, had been carried maimed and helpless to his tent. It was a sorry day's work that sent Neville Chamberlain, Adjutant-General of the Army, to the Sick List. It was a sorry week's work that had deprived our little force of the services of twenty-five officers and four hundred men. It had quite settled the question of the assault. With these diminished numbers, how could a sufficient force be left for the protection of our Camp? Even the most eager spirits now felt that it must be a hopeless effort. "There will be no assault on Delhi yet," wrote Hodson on the 16th; "our rulers will now less than ever decide on

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* The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi" says: "Seventeen men killed, and sixteen officers and a hundred and seventy-seven men wounded."

1857. July 16.

a bold course, and, truth to tell, the numbers of the enemy have so rapidly increased, and ours have been so little replenished in proportion, and our losses for a small army have been so severe, that it becomes a question whether now we have numbers sufficient to risk an assault. Would to Heaven it had been tried when I first pressed it!"

July 17. Resignation of General Reed.

On the 17th of July General Reed resigned the command of the Delhi Field Force. During his brief season of responsibility his health had broken down under the exertions and anxieties of his position, and it was useless any longer to struggle against his daily-increasing infirmities. So he made over the command of the Force to Brigadier Archdale Wilson, and betook himself to the quietude of the Himalayas.* The selection of an officer who had done so well in the actions on the Hindun was the source of general satisfaction in the Camp.† There were few who did not see in the change good promise of increased energy and activity in the prosecution of the siege. But, in truth, we had reached a period of its history at which energy and activity could be displayed only in acts of defensive warfare.

Brigadier Wilson in Command.

It is certain that when Brigadier-General Wilson took command of the Delhi Field Force, the circumstances which he was called upon to confront were of a most discouraging character. Two Commanders had been struck down by Death, and a third had been driven from Camp by its approaches. The Chiefs of the Staff—the Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General—lay wounded in their tents. For more than five weeks the British troops before Delhi had been standing upon the defensive. Time after time assaults upon the City had been projected, and had been deferred; and at last the bold experiment had been finally abandoned. During those five weeks the enemy had attacked us a score of times, and it had long been acknowledged that the British were the Besieged, not the Besiegers. It was impossible that all this should not have had its effect upon the discipline of the Delhi Field Force. It must be an eternal honour to that force, that the deteriorating effects of such a state of things were so slight; but, nevertheless, they were clearly discernible. The strength of the rebel garrison had been continually increasing; and though their loss was even heavier than our own, our numbers were so inferior, that in proportion to them our sufferings were greater. It was hard to say how much longer the endurance of our people would be proof against a constant succession of vexatious attacks on the part of the enemy, and profitless victories on our own. Our troops had grown weary of beating the enemy, without apparently weakening their resources, or diminishing their confidence, or lengthening the intervals between their attacks. It is not strange, therefore, that in the middle of this month of July the British Chief looked the difficulties of our position very gravely in the face, and that there were some doubts as to whether we could hold our own much longer with such fearful odds against us. But no such doubts ought to have

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* Hodson says that Wilson succeeded by virtue of seniority. The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi" says, "he was not the Senior General in Camp." The senior officer in camp, according to substantive rank, was Colonel Congreve, of H.M.'s Twenty-ninth, Quartermaster-General of Queen's troops. It is stated that he sent in a protest against his supercession and retired to Simlah. General Reed had anticipated the difficulty on the score of rank by making Wilson a Brigadier-General—an appointment afterwards confirmed by Government.

† See Greathed's Letters and the "History of the Siege of Delhi."

1857.
July 17.

1857. July 17.

been entertained for a moment. Our troops had been much harassed; they were diminished in numbers; they had seen a constant succession of stubborn encounters, which had conduced nothing to the final issue; and they were growing very weary of a state of things of which they could not see the end. But, if they had lost some of their discipline, they had lost none of their heart. They were impatient, but not desponding. They were equal to any demands that could have been made upon them, and would have resented the idea of retreat.

Question of Retirement.

But ever since the commencement of the month the thought of a retrograde movement had been fixing itself in the minds even of men who had been at one time eager for the bolder course, which had been described as the "gamester's throw." Before the death of General Barnard, Hervey Greathed—though he had thrown in the weight of his authority as Chief Civil Officer at Delhi, into the scales on the side of vigorous action—had begun to discern the fact that there might be some advantages to the country generally in liberating the troops now pent up before the walls of the great city, and wasting their energies in the strenuous idleness of a disastrous defence.* They were much needed at other points where our people were girt around with danger, and a great moral effect might be produced by a succession of victories, such as the Delhi Field Force, under happier circumstances, might calculate on achieving. The time for assaulting had passed. Neville Chamberlain and Baird Smith, who were both

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* "The determination to take Delhi by assault has been twice on the eve of execution, and I no longer feel confident that it will again be so far matured. And supposing I am right, the question will arise whether we should maintain our position, or raise the siege, and dispose of our forces as may best serve the public interests, until a second campaign be opened."—*Greathed to Lawrence, July 4. MS. Corres.*

1857. July 17.

by official position and native worth the moving principles of the besieging force, had given up all hope of succeeding in such an enterprise. Chamberlain, indeed, had begun to apprehend that, in their existing state of discipline, it might be hazardous in the extreme to entangle them in the streets of Delhi. There was nothing left for us, therefore, but to hold on until the arrival of reinforcements; and the question had arisen and had been freely discussed at Head-Quarters, whether, until we could appear before Delhi in greater strength, it would not, both on military and political grounds, be a wiser course to relax our hold, and employ our eager troops in other parts of the country. When Wilson assumed command, he found matters in this state. He did not originate the question of withdrawal.

Protests of Baird Smith.

What might have been his resolution, if left to his own unaided counsels, History can never declare. But the eager protests of Baird Smith soon swept away any doubts that the General might have entertained.* As soon as the Chief Engineer learnt that the proposal was likely to be laid before him, he resolved to anticipate the formal reference. On the first occasion of Wilson consulting him professionally, he threw all the earnestness of his nature into a great remonstrance against the project of withdrawal. He

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* It was on the 17th of July, the first day of Wilson's command, that Baird Smith pressed upon him the duty of not relaxing his hold on Delhi. On the 18th the Brigadier-General wrote to Sir John Lawrence urging him to send further reinforcements immediately. The letter was in French, and it contained these words: "Je retiendrai cette position jusqu' à la fin. Car il est de la plus grande importance que l'ennemi soit empêché de quitter Delhi pour ravager le pays. Pour faire ceci il est absolument nécessaire que je sois renforcé de la plus grande force et aussi vite qu'il est possible. J'entends que ce renforcement ne peut venir du sud, et en conséquence je prie que vous m'enverrez du Punjab un Regiment Anglais complet et deux de Sikhs ou Punjabees. Si je ne suis pas bien vite renforcé je serai forcé de retirer à Kurnaul. Les conséquences de ce mouvement seraient désastreuses."—*MS. Corres.*

1857. July 17. told the General that to raise the siege would be fatal to our national interests. "It is our duty," he said, "to retain the grip which we now have upon Delhi, and to hold on like grim Death until the place is our own." He dwelt upon the many circumstances in our favour. Our communications with the Punjab were open. There was still there a considerable amount of available strength, which the increasing security of that great province would soon place at the disposal of the Delhi leader. The army was in good health, and it was well supplied. It was true that little had been done to strengthen the position of our besieging army, or to bring our guns to bear with more fatal effect upon the enemy's works. But he pledged himself to do what as yet had been undone. And then he urged the General to consider what would be the result of the withdrawal of the Force. "All India," he said, "would at once believe that we retreated because we were beaten, and in such circumstances an adverse impression of this kind was as disastrous as the severest defeat we could sustain. We must abandon, in such a case, our communications with the Punjab, and cease to act as a covering force to that province, from which all the reinforcements we could hope for must be drawn; we must again fight our way to Delhi against reinvigorated enemies, increased in numbers and spirits, and we must cease to perform the incalculably important function of check-mating the entire strength of the revolt, by drawing towards Delhi, as a great focus, all the mutinous regiments of all arms, and so preventing them from dispersing themselves over the country, and attacking and overpowering our defenceless posts." These arguments prevailed. Wilson listened, and was convinced. He thanked

1857. July 17.

Baird Smith for this frank statement of his views, said that he would hold on, and then called upon him, as Chief Engineer, to state what could be done to maintain our position before Delhi with the least possible loss, until such time as the Delhi Field Force could be so strengthened as to render the final assault upon Delhi secure in its results. Then Baird Smith stated what Wilson, as an experienced Artilleryman, had long felt, that our great want was a want of far-reaching guns, that we had been always beaten by the heavy metal and wide range of the enemy's Artillery; but that as soon as we could bring down a siege train of sufficient magnitude and sufficient weight to silence the guns on the walls of Delhi, success would be certain. To all of this Wilson readily assented. He asked for a statement of the strength of ordnance which would be required for siege operations, which in due course was given; and at the same time the Chief Engineer undertook to have the work of his own department in a sufficient state of forwardness to give every possible advantage to the operations of the Artillery. "And from that time forward," said Baird Smith, in a letter written at a later period, "we were guided by these plans, and prepared busily for the resumption of active work on the arrival of the Siege Train."

Further Attacks on our Position.

The first week of Wilson's command was enlivened by two more attempts on the part of the enemy to drive us from our advanced position; firstly, on the Right, and then on the Left. Our scouts in the city had obtained intelligence that the enemy purposed to proceed in force to the neighbourhood of Alipore,*

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* Reinforcements had entered Delhi—mutineers from Jhansi, who, according to custom, were to try their luck on first arrival against the Feringhees.

1857. in our rear, to intercept an expected convoy on its way to our camp, and when they had thus drawn out a considerable part of our strength, to make a vehement attack upon our Right. The movement to July 18. Alipore was never made, but, on the 18th of July, the enemy again betook themselves to the old work of harassing us from the shelter of the suburbs; so a detachment of Infantry and Artillery was sent out, under Colonel Jones of the Sixtieth Rifles, with the old result. What had come to be called "rat-hunting" went on for a while, and a number of British officers and men fell beneath the fire of the enemy.* But there was this time no attempt at pursuit. Colonel Jones, having driven the mutineers from their shelter, withdrew his own men carefully and skilfully, covering their retirement with his guns. It was the last of our many conflicts in the Subzeemundee suburb. Our Engineer officers were already at work clearing away the cover—the garden-walls, the ruined houses, and the old serais, of which the enemy had made such good use from the commencement of the siege, and were connecting our advanced posts in that direction with the Main Picquet on the Ridge.

July 23. Perhaps it was in despair of making any impression upon our Right, that a few days afterwards, July 23rd, the enemy in considerable force streamed out of the Cashmere Gate, and endeavoured to establish themselves at Ludlow Castle, whence they opened a fire both on the Metcalfe Picquet and the Ridge. A column of British and Sikh Infantry, with guns from Turner's and Money's troops, was, therefore, sent out, under Brigadier Showers, to dislodge them. The

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* Our loss was one officer and twelve men killed, and three officers (one mortally) and sixty-six men wounded.

1857. July 23.

work was soon accomplished. The enemy were in retreat to the city walls, but again the fatal inclination to press on in pursuit was irresistible, and our column was drawn on towards the city walls, and many of our best officers were carried wounded to the rear. Colonel Seaton, who had been appointed to officiate as Adjutant-General, was shot through the body. Turner and Money of the Artillery, and others, were wounded;* and Captain Law, who was serving with Coke's rifles, was killed. The loss of the enemy was not heavy, and they carried off all their guns. After this, orders went forth prohibiting the forward movements, which had always been attended with so much disaster. Our main losses had commonly been incurred after we had driven back the enemy towards the walls of their stronghold. This system of warfare had been too long permitted. Had the enemy's numbers been more limited, it would have been less necessary to restrain the natural impetuosity of our people to push on and to punish in pursuit; but scarcely any amount of carnage that we could inflict upon the mutineers was any substantive gain to ourselves.

And so the month of July came to an end and left Wilson in good spirits; for Sir John Lawrence, never slackening in his great work, had responded to the General's appeal by fresh promises of help, and he had cast away all thoughts of raising the siege. Writing on the 30th of July to Mr. Colvin, who had earnestly protested against the thought of withdrawing from Delhi, he said: "It is my firm determination to hold

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* Mr. Cave-Browne says that Brigadier Showers was wounded, and compelled to give over the command to Colonel Jones. His name is not in the list given by Norman, and, therefore, it would seem that it was not officially returned. The wound must have been a very slight one, if any, for Showers was in action again on the 12th of August.

1857. July. my present position and to resist every attack to the last. The enemy are very numerous, and may possibly break through our entrenchments and overwhelm us. But this force will die at its post. Luckily, the enemy have no head and no method, and we hear dissensions are breaking out among them. Reinforcements are coming up under Nicholson. If we can hold on till they arrive, we shall be secure. I am making every possible arrangement to secure the safe defence of our position."

Unrecorded Heroism. And here I may fitly pause in this recital of military events—of engagement after engagement with the enemy, following each other in quick succession, all of the same type and all leading to the same results. The true story of the Siege of Delhi is not to be found in the bare record of these exploits. Many as were those gallant soldiers, whose active heroism it has been my privilege to illustrate in these pages, there were many more in the British Camp whose names have been unwritten, but whose gallantry, in doing and in suffering, was not less conspicuous. It was the fortune of some to be continually called to the front, to be specially thanked by commanding officers and named in official despatches, whilst others, day after day, week after week, month after month, laboured on, exposed to the fire of the enemy and to all the evil influences of camp-life in the worst season of the year, without praise, without encouragement, almost without notice. A signal instance of this presents itself in the circumstances of the two branches of the Artillery. The Light Batteries were always to the front, and the names of Scott, Turner, Money, Tombs, and others of the Horse Artillery or Horse

1857. July.

Batteries have repeatedly claimed admiring recognition; but of the Heavy Batteries, which, in their own way, were equally well served, scant mention has yet been made in this narrative of the siege.* The time for breaching operations had not yet come, and it was a dull and weary season for the Siege Artillery thus expending themselves in defensive efforts, outmatched in numbers, outmatched in weight of metal, outmatched in profuseness of ammunition. There was a scarcity of officers for duty in the batteries; there was a scarcity of gunners. Both had to be improvised and supplemented as best we could, so that men found themselves working at the guns who, a little while before, did not know a portfire from a sponge-staff. Stray Lancers, for whom there was not much cavalry-work in camp, were caught up and set to learn the gun-drill, and right good gunners they often made; whilst old Sikhs, who had learnt artillery practice under Runjit Singh's French officers, and

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* The principal officers with the siege batteries were Colonel Garbett, Major James Brind, Major Murray Mackenzie, and Major Kaye. The last-named had come down to Delhi with the first siege-train. Major Brind joined soon afterwards, and took a leading part in the siege operations up to the hour of final success. Colonel Garbett, who arrived at a later period, was appointed Brigadier of Artillery, on Wilson's nomination to the chief command; but he was wounded on his way from one battery to another, and though the wound was little more than a graze, of which he took no notice at first, it became afterwards a most virulent sore, which compelled him to take to his bed, and subsequently to leave the camp. He ultimately died of fever. Major Mackenzie was struck by the splinter of a shell on the 30th of June, and though in this case, also, the wound did not appear to be a severe one, he was driven also to Simlah, where he died. [Mackenzie and Kaye had served together with the Native troop of Horse Artillery which ascended the Hindoo Koosh, and was engaged in the battle of Bameean]. Major Gaiskill, who joined at a later period of the siege, succeeded Colonel Garbett in command of the Artillery. Among the younger officers distinguished during the siege were Captain Johnson, Assistant Adjutant-General of Artillery, who came down with Wilson from Meerut, and as chief staff-officer did excellent service, and Lieutenant Light, an active and energetic officer, always eager to go to the front, who was incapacitated by sickness about the middle of July, and unable to return to his duties. Griffith, Commissary of Ordnance, was driven from camp by cholera, and was succeeded by Captain Young.

1857. July.

had served the guns of the Kalsa at Sobraon and Chillianwallah, were recruited by John Lawrence, who never missed a chance of aiding the Delhi warriors, and sent down to man Wilson's batteries. But the time was now approaching when the real business of the Siege would commence in earnest, and the officers of the heavy batteries would contribute their share of good work towards the capture of the great city.

Incidents of the Siege.

Over and above the excitement of the frequent actions with the enemy, which always added the names of many brave men to the list of killed and wounded, there were sometimes lesser sensations to stir the heart of the Camp. On one occasion, an officer of good repute, whilst reconnoitring as a field-engineer, failed to give the parole with sufficient promptitude when challenged by one of our sentries, and was shot dead in the darkness of the night.* It often happened that officers on the look-out from exposed positions, or passing from post to post, or showing their heads above the breastworks of our batteries, became special marks for the rebel artillery-men, and narrowly escaped, if at all, with their lives.† Among the current Camp jokes was one to the effect that a soldier had made it matter of complaint that, since the Engineers had built up the parapets so high, a fellow at work in the batteries behind them could only get shot in the head. One officer is stated by the contemporary chroniclers of the Siege to have had such a fancy for exposing himself in the embrasures, that, in spite of repeated warnings from his comrades, he was killed one day at his dangerous post. 1857. July.

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* Captain Greensill, Her Majesty's Twenty-fourth Regiment.

† See following account of the bursting of a shell, which nearly deprived the Force of one of the best officers in it—Major Scott of the Artillery: "Major Scott had a very narrow escape from a shell yesterday; he was standing by his horse on the Ridge, looking through his glass, when a shell fell close by him and burst as it touched the ground. I saw his horse running off, and saw him on the ground, but he got up and walked on, and I saw him riding by just now, so I suppose he is not hurt. I was on the 'General's Mound' at the time, and the explosion drew my attention, and we heard afterwards who it was, and that a man of the Fusiliers had been wounded by a piece of the shell."—*Letters of Hervey Greathed.*

Cheerfulness of the Camp.

The general cheerfulness of our People, in spite of all dispiriting circumstances, was something upon which it is a pleasure to comment. Day after day our officers met each other with bright faces, laughed and joked, reciprocated kindly offices, and exchanged the news of the Camp or the tidings brought from a distance. There was ever alive amongst them a warmth of good-fellowship, which nothing could weaken or cool. To make a friendly visit to the tent of a wounded or sick officer was a part of every sound man's duty, which he was sure not to neglect. Such was the overflowing kindness shown to every man who was down, that if it had not been for the eager desire to be at work again that animated all, it would have been a privilege to be upon the sick-list. On fine evenings, when the sun was going down, the sick and wounded were brought out from the tents on their beds and litters, thus to taste the fresh air, to be exhilarated by the liveliness of the Camp, and to commune with their comrades. Officers and men alike enjoyed this change. There was one, however, the noblest sufferer of all, who would not permit himself to be thus brought out of the privacy of his tent, lest it should appear that he was parading his wounds.

Meanwhile, those, who were well, found great delight in the comradeship of their several Messes, and seemed to enjoy the rough Bohemianism which necessity had substituted for the polite amenities of the peaceful Cantonment. The rougher the ménage, the

1857. July. better the cheer. It has been recorded that in one notable instance, when tablecloths came into use, a good deal of the special jollity of the gathering was scared away by their introduction. It does not appear that at any time there was a scarcity of provisions. But many things, which had become almost necessities with our officers, fell short from time to time, and were painfully missed. Some were more fortunate, or had more forethought, than others; but what one Mess, or one man, missed, another was able to lend him. Sometimes the supplies of beer or wine were drunk out to the last bottle, and commonly each member of a Mess was put upon an allowance of drink;* sometimes the last cigar was smoked, and the generosity of a neighbour supplied the inconvenient want. There were no Sybarites among them, and even those who had been wont to fare sumptuously every day, were thankful for what they got, and laughed at the privations they were compelled to endure. Good clothes, too, after a while, became scarce in Camp. There was little regard for proprieties of costume, and men who had delighted to walk daintily in fine linen, went about in strange costumes of flannel, half civil half military in their attire, and were fain to possess themselves of the second-hand garments of their departed brethren. Even the chief civil officer in Camp, Hervey Greathed, was glad to get a pair of boots from his brother in the Engineers, and to buy the leavings of young Barnard's toilet when he quitted Camp after his father's death. And the Chaplain of the Force has told us how he was compelled to abandon all thought of ministering in appropriate clerical vestments, and to go about clothed like a brigand. 1857. July.

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* The greatest inconvenience of all was that no allowance was made for guests, and this limited hospitality. Stray arrivals in Camp were sometimes sore pressed for dinner, and compelled to fall back on Commissariat Beef.

And whilst our officers thus met each other with cheerful, sometimes radiant faces, the English soldier was quite jubilant. "I have been pleased," wrote one of the bravest and best of the Delhi warriors, "to observe the cheerful tone displayed at all times by our troops. I never saw British soldiers in camp so joyous. They walk and run about, in the afternoon and evening, when the rain and Pandy are at rest, as though they had nothing serious to do. Nor has it ever occurred to them that there was anything doubtful in the conflict." When off duty, the men amused themselves as in the most peaceful times, playing cricket and quoits, getting up pony races, and invigorating themselves with gymnastics. There was some talk of getting up rackets; but the old cantonment racket-court was in so exposed a situation that it was thought by no means an improbable contingency that the Enemy would take part in the sport, and with balls of a larger diameter than those proper to the game.

Drunkenness among the soldiery.

That the excitement of strong drink was much coveted by the soldiery in the English Camp need scarcely be set down in the narrative; but, on the whole, it may be recorded in their honour that few outrages were committed under its influence. The wet season had set in. The lowering skies, the drenching downfalls of rain, the constant damps, and all the wonted accompaniments of such weather, at a time when the activities of service rendered shelter impossible, not only had a depressing influence upon men's spirits, which rendered stimulants ever welcome to them, but had external results, in saturated clothes and boots oozing with water, that justified, if

1857. July.

they did not demand, a resort to such supposed correctives. There were some wise officers in Camp, who thought that still better precautions might be taken; and when fever and ague were prevalent among our people, bethought themselves of the value of quinine, as a prophylactic, and were minded to serve out a dose of it every morning to their men. An Artillery officer, of whom frequent mention has been made in this story of the Siege, when he found that his gunners demurred to imbibing the bitter draught, as no part of their military duty, told them that no one who refused to take it should ever have an extra dram; and so they swallowed the quinine for the sake of the rum which followed in the course of the day. And the result was, that scarcely a man of this Company was knocked over by the fever of the season.

Tidings from a distance.

During seasons of comparative quietude in Camp, news from the outer world was greedily sought and eagerly discussed. There was little or no communication with the country below, and so far as the present safety or future success of the Delhi Force was affected by operations in the lower country, there was little reason to concern themselves about those distant events, tidings of which commonly reached them crusted over with error, if not in the shape of substantial lies. Of the doings of the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief they knew, and indeed cared, little or nothing.* Sir John Lawrence was their Governor-General—their Commander-in-Chief. They looked to the great Punjab Commissioner for the means of taking Delhi, and with these means he was furnishing them with an energy of self-denial beyond all praise. But the great work which lay before our people on the Ridge, with all its toil and anxieties, its dangers and sufferings, did not so engross men's minds as to leave them no thought, no sympathy for their brethren who were girt with peril elsewhere. Most of all they sought news from Cawnpore and Lucknow, where Wheeler and Henry Lawrence, threatened by an overwhelming enemy, were looking anxiously for succours from below. False tidings of the relief of Lucknow were continually coming into Camp. It was said, time after time, that Wheeler was safe, sometimes with the addition that he was marching upon Delhi, and at others that the Sepoy regiments that had besieged him were bound for that place. At a later period it was reported (long before the first relief of Lucknow) that Havelock had fought a great battle with Maun Singh and defeated him, had entered the Oude capital, and that for three days the city had been given up to plunder and slaughter. From Calcutta, through some circuitous channel, there came a report that the French troops, forming part of the China expedition, were coming to help us; and it was rumoured in Camp that so great had been the excitement in London on the arrival there of news of the revolt, that the populace had burnt the India House, and hung the Directors up to the lamp-posts. 1857 July

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* I have a letter before me, written by the Military Secretary to Government, from Council Chamber, Calcutta, from which it is plain that on the 26th of July, three weeks after General Barnard's death, Government were ignorant of that event.

But tidings came at last, only too fatally true, that the garrison of Cawnpore, with all our women and children had been foully massacred, and that Sir Henry Lawrence was dead. It is hard to say whether the indignation excited by the one event or the sorrow born of the other were the stronger and more abiding feeling. There was not a man in Camp who did not

1857. July. grieve for the great and good commander of the Lucknow garrison; and there were many who, loving him as a father or a brother, shed such tears for him as they would have shed for the nearest and the dearest of their kin.* All felt that one of the Pillars of the State had fallen—perhaps the stoutest and the grandest of all—and that such a master in Israel was little likely to be seen again. In strong contrast to the tender feelings and pathetic utterances which this calamity called forth throughout the general camp, was the vehement exasperation which the news of the Cawnpore massacre elicited—the bitter hatred, the intense thirst of revenge. It was natural—it was commendable. Those stern soldiers "did well to be angry." No such foul act as this had ever stained the annals of British connexion with the East. The foul tragedy of the "Black Hole," which for a hundred years had been cited as the great horror of horrors, now paled beside the massacre of Cawnpore; for the victims of Surajah Dowlah's cruelty had been strong men. And ever as the atrocity was discussed in Camp, our people longed for tidings of the onward march of Havelock and Neill; and yearned for the coming of the day when the order would be given to them to set the mark of the avenger on the guilty city which had so long resisted and defied them.

Treatment of the Natives. It was not strange that, after this, the feeling of hatred against the coloured races, already strong in the British Camp, should have become more vehement and outspoken. It showed itself in many ways. We were everywhere surrounded by Natives. The typical Pandy, whose name was in every man's mouth, was the representative only of one of many phases of Native humanity, which were then ever present to us. It was one of the most curious characteristics of this Mutiny-war, that although the English were supposed to be fighting against the Native races, they were in reality sustained and supported by the Natives of the country, and could not have held their own for a day without the aid of those whom we hated as our national enemies. Not only were the coloured races fighting stoutly upon our side,* but thousands of non-combatants were sharing the dangers, without the glories, of the siege, and doing their appointed work with fidelity and alacrity, as though there had never been any rupture —any division of interests—any departure from the normal state of things, as it existed in quiet times. How utterly dependent upon Native Agency is the exotic European, though sprung from the working classes, and in his own country accustomed to the performance of the most menial and laborious duties, is known to all who have dwelt in India for a week. If the labour of the people had been utterly lost to us, our power must have suddenly collapsed. The last drop in the cup of domestic bitterness was the desertion of our Native household servants. But a Family could do better without this aid than a company of Infantry, a troop of Horse, or a battery of

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* One officer touchingly records in his journal now before me: "I do indeed feel that I have lost a prop in the world." The same writer, a day or two afterwards says: "In these days of battle and death there is so much to excite the mind, that one is not long, by any possibility, in the same vein of thought, but I felt beaten down when this sad tale reached me. Reflection brings home to one the sad public loss which his death occasions. At any time India would mourn his fall, but now, when she so much needs his guidance and his wisdom, the death of the soldier-statesman fills all with grief, and this to the putting aside of personal feeling. He was a rare specimen of God's handiwork."—*MS. Journal.*

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* "In camp," wrote Wilberforce Greathed to Mr. Colvin (August 23, 1857), "there is a feeling of confidence in our Native troops. Guides, Goorkahs, Cokey's (Coke's Rifles), and Sikhs, are all popular, and, I think, all smart and useful."

1857. July. Artillery.[*] Without these Native attendants of various kinds, our people would have had no food and no drink. They could not have fed their horses, or served their guns, or removed their sick. Both public and private servants, with but few exceptions, remained true to their employers throughout the siege, and some displayed instances of rare personal devotion.[†] It little matters what was the source of this fidelity. It may have been that these people, accustomed to the domination of the English, satisfied to move in the old groove, and sure of their accustomed pay from month to month, never troubled themselves to regard the national aspects of the struggle, and, with characteristic hatred of change, clung, therefore, to their old employments. But, of whatsoever it was the growth, the fact was there; and I am afraid that it was not sufficiently appreciated by those who profited so largely by it. It has been shown how the cook-boys, carrying the coveted dinners to our picquets, were exposed to the merciless fire of the enemy, and how lightly their danger was regarded. This was but one of many signs of the little gratitude that was felt towards these serviceable auxiliaries. But there was more than this negative unkindliness. For many of our people in Camp, in return for the good services of the Natives, gave back only the words and blows of contumely and insult more readily even than in quiet times.* Those times were changed, but we were not changed with them. The sturdy iron of the national character was so inflexible that the heat of the furnace through which we were passing had not yet inclined it to bend. As arrogant, as intolerant, and as fearless as ever, we still closed our eyes to the fact that our lives lay in the hollow of the hand which we so despised. Even in the midst of disasters and humiliations, which would have softened and enfeebled others, our pride of race still upheld us, stern, hard, and immovable.

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[*] The author of the "History of the Siege of Delhi," says: "There were ten Natives for every European in camp. In every troop of Artillery there were four times as many Natives as Europeans; in the Cavalry two men for every horse; without them the work could not go on."

[†] Take, for example, the following, illustrative of the good and gallant conduct of some of our Native Artillery drivers. It is from a letter addressed to the author: "When returning from this day's work, my guns brought up the rear, and I had to hold the mutineers in check, picking up any of our wounded and placing them on my limbers until they could be provided for. One of my Native drivers was shot through the leg and the bone broken below the knee. He was riding one of the leaders in the gun-team. I rode up and told him to stop the gun until I could dismount him; but he said, 'Kuch-purwan-neh (never mind), Sahib. I would sooner remain on my horse with my gun.' And he would have remained had I not insisted on dismounting him and placing him in a dooly. This was the sort of spirit many of my Natives showed throughout."—*MS. Correspondence.*

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* The following statement is made by the author of the "Siege of Delhi:" "So many sanguinary fights and executions had brutalised our men, that they now regarded the life of a Native as of less value than that of the meanest of animals; nor had their officers endeavoured by precept or example to correct them. . . . . Men of humanity were shocked, and this made the most reckless reflect. . . . . The spirit of exasperation which existed against Natives at this time will scarcely be believed in Europe. Servants, a class of men who behaved, on the whole, throughout the mutiny with astonishing fidelity, were treated even by many of the officers with outrageous harshness. The men beat and ill-used them. In the batteries they would make the bheesties (water-carriers), to whom they showed more kindness than to the rest, sit out of the works to give them water. Many of the unfortunates were killed. The sick syces, grass-cutters, and dooly-bearers, many of whom were wounded in our service, lay for months on the ground, exposed to the sun by day and the cold at night; and it was with difficulty that one or two medical men could get, for those under their care, a few yards of canvas or a reed-hut under which they might huddle together. A general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi, a large number of whom were known to wish us success, was openly proclaimed. Bloodthirsty boys might be heard recommending that all the Native orderlies, irregulars, and other 'poorbeahs' in our camp should be shot. These sentiments were not those of all, nor of the best and wisest; but few ventured to gainsay them." Although this is an anonymous work, the authorship is well known, and carries some weight of authority with it. I am bound, however, to say that some of my informants, to whom I have referred with especial reference to the alleged inhumanity of our people towards the Natives in camp, are disposed to doubt whether it manifested itself during the siege more strongly than before the mutiny. It is said to have been only the old normal state of things — unaltered, unrepressed.

1857. July.

And in spite of all human calculations, and in defiance of all reason, the very obduracy and intolerance, which might have destroyed us in this conjuncture, were in effect the safeguard of the nation. That stubborn, unyielding self-reliance, that caused the noblest of our enemies to say that the English never knew when they were beaten, had caused the Indian races to believe that if a single white man were left in the country, he would regain the Empire for his race. And though it is impossible for those who sit deliberately in judgment upon such conduct towards a subject people not to condemn it, the fact remains that this assertion, this appearance of strength, *was* strength in the midst of our weakness.

Within the City.

Meanwhile, within the walls of Delhi the national character was shaping events with equal force and distinctness. There were feebleness and irresolution and divided councils in high places, and elsewhere a great antagonism of interests, internecine strife, oppression, and misery not to be counted. Whilst the English were clinging together and moving as one man, the inmates of Delhi were dislocated and distracted. The Court, the Soldiery, the industrial inhabitants were in deadly feud the one with the other, and as the numbers of our enemies increased, their difficulties also increased. A state of things had indeed arisen very fatal to the continued supremacy of the King, the circumstances of which will be detailed in another chapter of this history.

CHAPTER VI.

QUESTION OF THE ABANDONMENT OF PESHAWUR—VIEWS OF SIR JOHN LAWRENCE, COLONEL EDWARDES, AND GENERAL NICHOLSON—FURTHER DISASTERS IN THE PUNJAB—JHELUM AND SEALKOTE—THE MOVABLE COLUMN AFFAIR OF THE TRIMMOO GHAUT—NICHOLSON AT DELHI—THE BATTLE OF NUJUFGHUR.

1857. May—July. The Question of Peshawur.

THE hope of the Army before Delhi in the noble efforts of Sir John Lawrence was not doomed to be disappointed. It has been seen how he responded to every call for reinforcements; how, as time went on, and the pride of the Mogul was still unbroken, the great Punjab Commissioner was little by little stripping his province of its most reliable troops, until it appeared to others that he was going too far in these sacrificial efforts. A great conflict of opinion, indeed, had arisen among the leading intelligences of the Punjab. To the chiefs of the great Peshawur Council it seemed that the maintenance of the integrity of the frontier was a paramount necessity, to which all other considerations should yield. Before the end of May Edwardes had written to the Chief Commissioner, saying: "Things seem to be settling down in Hindostan, and to be pretty safe throughout the Punjab, and I think that if you could in any way manage, it would only be prudent to throw some

1857. more strength upon this point. For Peshawur is a vital point, as it were, and if we conquer here we are safe everywhere, whereas disaster here would roll down the Punjab. It was absolutely necessary to disarm the regiments, and yet it recoils on us, for we want Native troops. . . . . . We must husband our Europeans, and we do so. We carry them about on elephants and carts like children. If they want a post-chaise per man they must have it. Can you not think of any way to help us at this pinch? . . . You know on what a nest of devils we stand. Once let us take our foot up, and we shall be stung to death."*

But the eyes of the Chief Commissioner were turned in another direction, and far other thoughts were pressing on his mind. Peshawur seemed to him to be a source of infinite weakness to the whole Empire. Sir John Lawrence had ever held fast to the opinion that the recovery of Delhi was an object of such magnitude, that all else was dwarfed beside it; and in the stedfast pursuit of this object he was prepared even to abandon the Peshawur valley, leaving it in the hands of Dost Mahomed of Caubul in free and friendly cession, and retiring within the line of the Indus. For Peshawur was ever a great blister to our European Army, drawing thither to the frontier regiment upon regiment, and battery upon battery, whose presence could not be dispensed with so long as we held those dangerous breadths of country beyond the river. To release these regiments from the necessity of keeping watch and ward upon the border would have been immense gain to us at such a time. So Lawrence proposed, in the event of the weakness of our European Army threatening with failure the enterprise against Delhi, to invite the

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* Colonel Edwardes to Sir John Lawrence, May 27.—*MS. Correspondence.*

1857. June.

Ameer of Caubul to Peshawur, to ask him, in pursuance of his alliance with the British Government, to occupy the valley with his troops, and finally to promise that, if he should remain true to us, the British Government would make over the coveted territory to him in perpetuity.

To this effect, therefore, Lawrence wrote to Edwardes, telling him to consult Nicholson and Cotton on the expediency of the projected movement. The letter was written on the 9th of June. His Secretary —Captain Hugo James, a man of great mental vigour, capable in action as in council, but who seems to have shared the common fate of Secretaries, of whom little more account is taken than of the pens they wield, and to have received far less than the credit which he deserved—was startled by the proposal, and recorded a memorandum against it. With characteristic frankness and candour John Lawrence sent it on to Peshawur, adding a note to it in the following words: "Here is James's view of the matter. All appears to depend upon the *if* in the third line. If we can hold the Punjaub, doubtless we should retain Peshawur. But I do not think that we could do so. Troops from England could not be in Calcutta before October, and up here before December or January. A retreating army which has not been beaten can command supplies. . . . . One thing appears to be most certain, which is, that if disaster occurs at Delhi, all the Native Regulars, and some of the Irregulars (perhaps many) will abandon us. We should, then, take time by the forelock."

Protest of Colonel Edwardes.

But there was nothing in this to convince the Peshawur Council. Nicholson had just returned from his first great raid, and he and Cotton concurred with Edwardes heartily in their opposition to

1857. June 11. the project: "We (Edwardes, Nicholson, and Sydney Cotton)," wrote Edwardes on June 11, "are unanimously of opinion that with God's help we can and will hold Peshawur, let the worst come to the worst, and it would be a fatal policy to abandon it and to retire across the Indus. It is the anchor of the Punjab, and if you take it up the whole ship will drift to sea. For keeping the mastery of the Punjab, there are only two obligatory points—the Peshawur valley and the Maunjha; all the rest are mere dependencies. Mooltan is valuable as the only practicable line of retreat to the sea; but if we hold on resolutely to Peshawur and the Maunjha, we shall never need to retreat. If you abandon Peshawur, you give up the Trans-Indus; and giving up the Trans-Indus, you give up the homes of the only other troops besides Europeans from whom you expect aid. . . . The loyalty of the Mooltanee Pathan border is a source of the greatest comfort to us now, but what a blow to them if we let the Afghans overrun the Derajat. And as to a friendly transfer of Peshawur to the Afghans, Dost Mahomed would not be a mortal Afghan—he would be an angel—if he did not assume our day to be gone to India, and follow after us as an enemy. . . . Europeans cannot retreat—Caubul would come again! . . . We believe that at Peshawur and Lahore we can ride out the gale, if it blow big guns, till the cold weather comes, and the English people send us a white army, in whom (to use the slang of the day) 'implicit confidence' can be placed." And again on the following day: "The more I think over your proposal to abandon Peshawur, the more fatal it seems, and I am convinced that whatever doubt may hang over our attempt to hold it, the attempt to give it up would be certain ruin." June 20. Eight days afterwards he wrote again, still more earnestly: "I don't know anything in this war that has surprised me so much as the judgment you have now formed on this subject. It is useless to re-discuss it; but I earnestly hope you will never have cause to propose it to Government, and that if you do, Government may not consent, for I believe that the move would be more damaging than any other we could make. As to deliberately giving up the Trans-Indus, by choice as a boundary, on the score of expense, it surprises me more and more, for you and I have often considered this matter, and I always understood you to be convinced that the Indus is not a practicable boundary, and that it would take an army of twenty thousand men or more between Attock and Mooltan, and never be secure."

Reply of Sir John Lawrence.

To this the Chief Commissioner replied, earnestly setting forth the advantages of concentrating the British forces in the territories upon the hither side of the Indus: "Here we are," he wrote, "with three European regiments, a large artillery, and some of our best Native troops locked up across the Indus—troops who, if at Delhi, would decide the contest in a week. What have we got for all the rest of the Punjab? We have barely two thousand Europeans. I doubt if we have so many holding the posts of Philour, Govindghur, and Ferozepore, Lahore, and Mooltan. We have not a man more with a white face whom we can spare. We cannot concentrate more than we have now done, except by giving up Rawul-Pindee, and eventually Peshawur. Should the Sikhs rise, our condition on this side the Indus will be well-nigh desperate. With the Peshawur force on this side we should be irresistibly strong. There was no one thing which tended so much to the ruin of Napoleon in 1814 as the tenacity with which,

1857. June 22. after the disasters at Leipsic, he clung to the line of the Elbe, instead of falling back at once to that of the Rhine. He thus compromised all his garrisons beyond the Elbe, and when he was beaten in the field, these gradually had to surrender. But these troops would have given him the victory had they been at his side at Bentzen, and the other conflicts which followed Leipsic."

June 25. On the evening of June 25 the Peshawur Commissioner received from Sir John Lawrence, at Rawul-Pindee, a message in the following words: "A severe action (at Delhi), apparently with little result, on the 23rd. Bareilly mutineers en route to Delhi. Gwalior Contingent have mutinied. Agent has left. If matters get worse, it is my decided opinion that the Peshawur arrangements should take effect. Our troops before Delhi must be reinforced, and that largely. They must hold their ground." On the receipt of this message, Edwardes, Cotton, and James* met together in Council and determined on another remonstrance against the project, which from the first hour of its enunciation had so much disturbed and alarmed them. The letters of the Chief Commissioner were sufficiently perplexing, but they suggested rather proposal and discussion than immediate action, whilst the brief, expressive sentences of the telegram indicated an intention to do the thing and at once. The language, indeed, was fast becoming the language of absolute instruction. There was no time to be lost. The chief military and the chief civil authority at Peshawur, therefore, put forth severally energetic written protests against what they believed to be so fatal a measure. "We have

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* Captain James had by this time been appointed to succeed Colonel Nicholson as Deputy-Commissioner at Peshawur.

1857. June 26.

Opinions of General Cotton.

pushed our conquests," wrote General Cotton, "up to the very mouths of the Afghanistan passes, and at this very moment, by God's blessing, our strongest position in India is at the mouth of the Khyber. By our good rule we have engaged the affections (I may say) to a considerable extent of the border tribes, and in the hour of need they (who, not many years since, were our most bitter enemies), relying on our great name and power, have come forward to help us against the disaffection of the very troops with whom we had conquered the Sikhs, Punjabees, and others. A retrograde movement from Peshawur, believe me, would turn all these parties, now our friends, against us. The Punjab Irregular Force, Pathans, Sikhs, Punjabees, and such like, no longer respecting our power, will, in all likelihood, turn against us, and their most valuable services be lost to us for ever. My dear Sir John, our removal from Peshawur cannot fail to be disastrous, and cannot be effected without immediate confusion throughout the whole of this part of the country, and throughout the length and breadth of British India. Hence the measure will seriously injure the interests of our forces in all quarters, whilst the additional strength to be gained would be small, and, indeed, we could afford no timely aid. In handing over the Peshawur district to the Dost (a measure which we may pretend to be a mere matter of expediency and not of necessity), the Afghans will at once see our weakness, and will duly profit by the same against the common enemy. To this frontier, and to the present strength of our position on it, as well as to Calcutta at the opposite end of our territory, we must look for the recovery of our power throughout the intermediate kingdoms of the Bengal Presidency. Our great name is upheld

1857. June 26. on our frontier, whilst Calcutta and this seaboard, in the plenitude of power, with European reinforcements continually arriving, will afford eventually and more surely the necessary succour. At this very moment six or eight regiments of Europeans must be between Calcutta and Delhi, en route to the seat of war, and treble that amount will be eventually thrown in from home and elsewhere, and by such means must our supremacy be recovered. When could our troops reach the seat of war, and in what numbers and condition? These questions must be duly considered, and by them the loss and gain of our removal from hence be balanced and determined on. I earnestly implore of you, my dear Sir John, to hold to our position on this frontier. The required succour must indeed be thrown in from Calcutta, not from this. When the reinforcements from above and below, at present in progress towards Delhi, have reached their destination, I feel confident that that city will again fall into our hands, and I am very much mistaken if disaffection does not then cease in all quarters, and our power being thus established, mutiny will gradually disappear throughout the land."

Opinion of Colonel Edwardes. On the same morning, Colonel Edwardes wrote, with like decision: "General Cotton, James, and myself are all of opinion that you should not go on throwing away your means in detail by meeting General Reed's demands for reinforcements. Delhi is not India, and if General Reed cannot take it with eight thousand men, he will not take it with nine thousand or ten thousand. However important a point, it is only a point, and enough has been done for it. You will serve the Empire better by holding the Punjab than by sacrificing the Punjab and recovering Delhi. You will sacrifice the

Punjab, if you either withdraw General Cotton's force from Peshawur, or fritter away Nicholson's Movable Column, already too weak. Make a stand! 'Anchor, Hardy, anchor!' Tell General Reed he can have no more men from here, and must either get into Delhi with the men he has, or get reinforcements from below, or abandon the siege and fall back on the Sutlej, leaving Delhi and its dependencies to be reorganised in the cold weather. There are two policies open to you—to treat the Punjab as secondary to the North-West Provinces and go on giving and giving troops to General Reed till you break down in the Punjab, or to maintain the Punjab as your first duty and the most important point of the two, and to refuse to give General Reed any more troops than you can spare. We are decidedly and distinctly of the latter opinion. . . . We consider that if you leave the Peshawur frontier, we shall not hold together for a month, but be demoralised and despised, and reduced to the condition of a flock of sheep. . . . If you hold the Punjab, you will facilitate the reconquest of India from the sea-board. We have only got to hold on three months. Do not try too much. We are outnumbered. Stick to what you can do. Let us hold the Punjab, *coute qui coute*, and not give up one European necessary to that duty. Whatever takes place in Central India, we shall stand in a firm and honourable attitude if we maintain the capitals on the sea and the frontiers here. Between the two it is all a family quarrel—an insurrection in our own house. If we let foreigners in from the frontier, the Empire is invaded. We may pretend to make friendly presents of provinces, but we cannot disguise that we have lost them by weakness. India has not yet recovered from our 1857.

1857. June 26.

expulsion from Afghanistan. The world ignores our voluntary cession of it after Pollock's expedition, and knows well that we could not hold it. Do not repeat the policy, and give up the Trans-Indus. No words of mine can express my sense of the disgrace and ruin that it will bring upon us. It is abandoning the cause of England in the East. Don't yield an inch of frontier; gather up your resources, and restrict yourself to the defence of the Punjab. It is a practicable and a definite policy, and we will support you to the last. . . . If General Reed, with all the men you have sent him, cannot get into Delhi, let Delhi go. Decide on it at once. . . . Don't let yourself be sucked to death as General Reed is doing. He has his difficulties, and we have ours. You have made vast efforts for him, and no one can blame you for now securing your own promise. . . . The Empire's reconquest hangs on the Punjab."

Opinion of General Nicholson.

Whilst Cotton and Edwardes were thus throwing all the earnestness of their natures into their letters to the Chief Commissioner, protesting against the abandonment of Peshawur, Nicholson, who was proceeding to take command of the Movable Column, visited Lawrence at Rawul-Pindee, and orally reiterated the arguments on which the three friends based their opposition to the retrograde movement. Lawrence, however, still clung to his opinion. "Admitting," he said, "which I do, that there is much force in the arguments adduced in favour of the maintenance of our hold on Peshawur, what are we to do when all the British troops which we can scrape together, exclusively of those at Peshawur, have been despatched to Delhi and still more be required?" "Rather than abandon Peshawur," answered Nicholson, "let us give up Murree and Rawul-

Pindee. Give up every place but Peshawur, Lahore, and Mooltan." To this Lawrence replied "that such a measure would isolate those three places, lock up a fine force in Peshawur, and expose us to destruction in detail." But nothing that Lawrence could urge shook Nicholson's deeply-grounded convictions. They parted. The soldier passed on to his appointed work. The statesman remained to ponder the eagerly enforced opinions of his chief advisers in the Punjab, whilst awaiting the decision of the Governor-General to watch the progress of events, and to do all in his power to avert the necessity, the apprehension of which had so much alarmed and perplexed him.

1857. June—July.

He had written to Lord Canning on the 10th of June, enclosing the letter which on the day before he had sent to Edwardes; but communication with Calcutta was at that time slow and uncertain in the extreme, and the brief telegraphic message which he had asked for in reply had not arrived in the third week of July. The momentous question was still unsolved. Neither had come the order, "Hold on to Peshawur to the last," nor the permission, "You may act as may appear expedient regarding Peshawur"—in one or the other of which forms he had requested that a telegraphic message might be sent to him. Events, as they were then developing themselves, seemed rather to strengthen the probability of the dreaded alternative being presented to us. He knew little of what was passing below Delhi, but there and in the Punjab itself were awkward symptoms of accumulated danger. The numbers of the enemy were increasing, and with numbers there was increased confidence within the great imperial stronghold. And regiment after regiment was falling away from its allegiance in the territories which John Lawrence

1857. July. governed; so that we appeared to be drifting closely and more closely upon the terrible alternative which he had so greatly dreaded. Still, therefore, he felt convinced that the advice which he had given was wise and salutary; and again he wrote to Lord Canning on the 24th of July, saying, "All these reinforcements ought to enable our army to maintain itself in its present position, and allow the mutineers to expend their power against our entrenchments. But should further aid be required from this quarter, our only resource would be to abandon Peshawur and Kohat, and to send the troops thus relieved on to Delhi. It seems to me vain to attempt to hold Lahore, and insanity to try to retain Peshawur, &c., if we are driven from Delhi. The Punjab will prove short work to the mutineers, when the Delhi Army is destroyed. . . . . . . My policy would then be to bring the troops from across the Indus and send them to Delhi; in the mean time to send all our women and children down the rivers to Kurrachee, and then, accumulating every fighting man we have, to join the Army before Delhi or hold Lahore, as might appear expedient. Colonel Edwardes, General Cotton, and Nicholson are for maintaining our hold on Peshawur to the last. They argue that we could not retire in safety, and that the instant we attempted to make a retrograde movement all would be up against us. This I do not believe; but granting that insurrection would immediately ensue, I *maintain that the force at* Peshawur would make good its retreat. It contains more soldiers, more guns, more power, than that with which Pollock recovered Caubul after forcing the passage of the Khyber. Between Peshawur and the Indus are no defiles, but an open country; the only difficulty is the passage of the Indus, which,

1857. July.

with Attock in our hands, ought not to be a work of danger. It is for your Lordship to decide what course we are to pursue. In the event of misfortune at Delhi, are we to leave that Army to its fate and endeavour to hold its own, or shall we, by a timely retirement from beyond the Indus, consolidate our resources in the Punjab, and maintain the struggle under the walls of Delhi. I pray that your Lordship will decide one way or the other. If we are left to decide the matter ourselves, time will be lost in vain discussions; and by the time we decide on the proper course to follow, it will prove too late to act effectually."

July 15. Decision of Lord Canning.

Whilst this appeal was slowly making its way to its destination, an answer to Lawrence's letter of the 10th of June was circuitously travelling up to the Punjab. It was dated July 15, and it said: "The outbreak at Indore on the 1st will no doubt have interrupted the dawk as well as the telegraph to Bombay. I therefore send a steamer to Madras with this letter and the despatches which accompany it; and I shall request Lord Harris to telegraph to Lord Elphinstone my answer to your question regarding Peshawur. It will be, 'Hold on to Peshawur to the last.' I should look with great alarm to the effect in Southern India of an abandonment of Peshawur at the present time, or at any time until our condition becomes more desperate or more secure." Thus, officially, was the momentous question settled by the "highest authority;" practically, indeed, it had settled itself before Lord Canning's letter was received. The contingency, which had been contemplated, never arrived; it was not left for the nation to discern the evil effects of either the retreat from Delhi or the abandonment of Peshawur. The question never went beyond the

1857. July. domain of discussion, and it is of little use now to speculate as to which movement would have been attended with the more disastrous results. ~~But there~~ would have been a grave omission from the pages of this history if there had been no mention of this discussion. For nothing is more significant of the magnitude of the dangers which threatened our Indian Empire in the Summer and Autumn of 1857, than the fact that at a time when the English held fast to the maxim, which Clive had enunciated nearly a century before, that "to stand still is danger, to recede is ruin," the strong spirit of Sir John Lawrence counselled the abandonment of the frontier-station of Peshawur and the adjacent territory to the Afghans, who, not long before, had been our enemies in the field. It must be admitted that, at the time, the weight of authority bore heavily against the proposal; and no man was more willing than Lawrence himself to acknowledge that a measure which met with strenuous opposition from such men as those who set their faces against it, was certainly a doubtful measure.* But time and maturity of reflection did not affect his original convictions. He remained stedfast to his first opinion; and years have rather increased than diminished the number of adherents to the policy which he enunciated when the crisis was upon us. Our larger and more accurate knowledge of the state of affairs, that existed in the Summer of 1857, has taught us better to understand the arguments by which the Chief Commissioner justified a proposal, by which alone he conceived that in the last resort he could secure the salvation of the empire. Those arguments, as more clearly discerned by the later light of history, may be thus briefly summarised:

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* It ought always to be remembered that the strongest opponents of the measure were the chief Peshawur officers, whose tendency it naturally was to take a local view of the question. Lawrence, years afterwards, with characteristic frankness, wrote that "certainly, in having Herbert Edwardes, John Nicholson, and Sydney Cotton against me, it is clear that there was a great deal to be said on the other side." Indeed, their arguments, as to the danger of abandoning Peshawur, were altogether unanswerable. But so also were the arguments as to the danger of withdrawing the Delhi Field Force. And this danger Sir John Lawrence was more capable of estimating aright than the little confederacy of military and political officers on the frontier. On the other hand it is to be observed that Neville Chamberlain, who knew well how nearly the siege of Delhi had been raised, confessed after the capture of the place, that he concurred in the views, which Lawrence had declared some months before. It was his belief that to retreat from Delhi would have been absolute ruin. "We should have lost all our heavy guns and matériel; our Native troops and our camp-followers would have deserted us; and our British force would have been worn down and destroyed. The Delhi Force could not have made good its retreat on the Punjab, and, in such circumstances, the Punjabee Force could

1857. July.

The Question reviewed.

No one knew so well as John Lawrence what, in the months of June and July, was stirring the hearts of the English leaders at Delhi, for to no one did they write so frequently, so fully and so freely, to declare their wants and to describe their prospects. He knew that the thought of raising the siege was present to them; for it was before him in letters, some of which are quoted in these pages. He knew that all depended upon the support which he could give the besieging force. He did not disguise from himself for a moment the fact that the abandonment

not have maintained itself at Lahore. It was doubtful whether, with all its available means it could have retreated on Mooltan." It must be remembered, too, that Lord Canning, who took a very unfavourable view of Sir John Lawrence's proposal, and attributed this policy to the failing health of the Chief Commissioner, had no accurate knowledge of the state of affairs at Delhi—between which place and Calcutta all communication was cut off, and the capture of which still seemed to be a proximate event of no sort of difficulty to the besieging Force. It should be added that the Lumsdens, who were at Candahar at the time, looking at the question from the stand-point of Afghan politics, sent an urgent missive in cipher, urging him to hold on to the last. "If Peshawur and Kohat," they said, "are given up at this moment, we shall have all Afghanistan down upon our backs, besides throwing open the gate of Afghanistan, the Khyber, for ever. . . . Don't give an inch of ground; but trust in Providence, fight it out, and recal us sharp to help you."—*MS.* [The extracts preceding are from unpublished letters.]

1857. July. of Peshawur would be an immense evil; but those were times in which there was often only a choice of evils, and it seemed to Lawrence that, in a large imperial sense, the retirement of the British Army from Delhi would be the greater evil of the two. He stood pledged to the policy of regaining that great centre of Mahomedanism, and crushing the rebellion rampant there in the name of the King; for he had himself earnestly and energetically, and with an overpowering force of argument, urged upon General Anson, at the commencement of the crisis, the paramount necessity of an immediate advance upon Delhi, at a time when the chiefs of the Army Staff were representing the thing to be impossible. He was bound, therefore, in honour to do all that lay in his power to bring it to a successful issue. The policy which he had so stoutly advocated in May seemed still in June and July to be the policy which the national safety imperatively demanded; nay, every succeeding day had rendered it more apparent to him that our inability to "dispose of" Delhi was creating everywhere an impression of our weakness, which was encouraging our enemies and enervating our friends. All eyes were turned towards that great city, and as weeks passed, and still it seemed that the English, who had gone to besiege had become the besieged, there was a growing mistrust as to the wisdom of holding fast to the English alliance, which would soon have rendered us a friendless and feeble few, to be easily mastered and destroyed. With this knowledge pressing hourly upon him, Sir John Lawrence, the more he thought, was the more convinced that, in the last extremity, if the paucity of British troops before Delhi should render its capture impossible, and necessitate the withdrawal of our Army, he would release the force posted in the Peshawur valley, and make over the territory to the Ameer of Caubul. 1857. July.

But it was never intended that this should be a precipitate movement, or that we should prematurely anticipate an extremity which might never arise. It was his design, in the first instance, to move all our women and children to the Lahore side of the Indus, so that our troops might retain their grip of the country unencumbered to the last moment, and then move lightly and rapidly across the river. The cession, it was felt, would be a source of unbounded delight to Dost Mahomed, and it was believed that though it might not secure the permanent fidelity and friendship of the Afghans, it would, for a time at least, hold them in the bonds of a flattered and self-satisfied durance, and afford us the security of the forbearance which we desired.

The Jhelum Mutiny.

It has been said that there were increasing signs of general unrest in the Punjab. The most portentous of these were the mutinies at Jhelum and Sealkote. The Jhelum cantonment lies on the bank of the river which bears that name. That the Fourteenth Sepoy Regiment posted there was on the brink of mutiny was well known. Sir John Lawrence, therefore, despatched a force thither to disarm them—a small compact force consisting of some companies of the Twenty-fourth Queen's, some Horse Artillery guns, under Lieutenant Henry Cookes, and a party of Lind's Mooltanee Horse, the whole under the command of Colonel Ellice, of the Twenty-fourth. The Chief Commissioner had prepared a plan of operations for taking the Sepoys by surprise; but the Colonel,

1857. July 7. thinking that he knew better than any civilian how to manage an affair of this kind, departed from Lawrence's views, and sketched out a plan of his own. There was, therefore, no surprise. When the Europeans were seen filing down the rising ground opposite the cantonment, the Sepoys knew what was coming.* Happening to be out on morning parade, they saw the English column advancing. Regardless of the orders and entreaties of their officers, they began at once to load their muskets. The officers saw that they had no longer any power over their men, and sought safety with the European troops. Then the Sepoys took up their main position in the quarter-guard. It was a strong brick building, with a battlemented roof, erected for purposes of defence by Sir Charles Napier, and afforded good cover to the insurgents, who threw out a party in advance to guard the approaches to it, whilst others took shelter in their Lines, the mud-huts of which had been loopholed in expectation of the crisis. Our people were full of courage and enthusiasm, and they flung themselves headlong upon the enemy. Lind's Mooltanees charged gallantly, but were met by a galling fire, which they could not resist. Cookes' guns opened, but within too near a range, and the musketry of the enemy did better execution than our own Artillery at so short a distance. The Sepoys fired from behind the cover of their mud-walls, and our grape was comparatively harmless. But now the British Infantry came up with their intrepid commander at their head, and advanced full upon the quarter-guard. The attack was a gallant and successful one; the quarter-guard was carried, and the Sepoys then vacated their huts and fell back upon the empty lines of the Thirty-ninth, from which they were driven by the bursting of a well-directed shell to a village on the left of the cantonment.

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* Mr. Cooper ("Crisis in the Punjab") says Colonel Gerrard, full of confidence in his men, had "informed them of the object of the European arrival."

1857. July 7.

By this time the noon-day sun was beating fiercely down upon our exhausted people. Colonel Ellice had been carried from the field dangerously wounded. Captain Spring had been shot dead,* and we had lost many men and many horses in the encounter. Our troops had been marching from the hour of midnight, and had been actively engaged since sunrise. Nature demanded rest; and it was sound discretion at such a time to pause in our offensive operations. It would have been well, perhaps, if the pause had been longer and the renewed operations more carefully matured. At four in the afternoon, when the heat was still great, an attack on the village was ordered. Colonel Gerrard, of the Fourteenth, took command of the Force that went out to destroy the mutinous regiment, in whose fidelity he had once trusted. The result was disastrous. Again the Sepoys had good cover, and we found ourselves entangled in streets, in which we suffered much, but could do little. The guns were brought up within too short a range, and the musketry of the enemy told with deadly effect upon the gunners. The Europeans, partly from fatigue, and partly, perhaps, from the stimulants which they had taken to reinvigorate themselves and the effect of the slant rays of the afternoon sun, are said to have "staggered" up to the village and to have been easily repulsed. The retreat was sounded,

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* He had left Roorkhee, as previously stated, with Baird Smith, on the 29th of June (*ante*, page 563), and had only just joined his regiment when his career was thus closed on the battle-field.

1857. July 7. and our troops were withdrawn. Two guns were carried back, but a third, in spite of the gallant efforts of Lieutenant Battye, with a party of Mounted Police, fell into the hands of the enemy, and was turned against our retreating people.

Nothing more could be done on that evening. At dawn on the morrow the conflict was to be renewed. July 8. Both forces had bivouacked on the plain. But when day broke it was found that the mutineers had evacuated their position and fled. Many had been killed in the two engagements; some were drowned in the Jhelum; others fell into the hands of our Police, or were subsequently given up by the Cashmere authorities, in whose country they had sought refuge, and thus surrendered, they were blown away from our guns. Very few of them ultimately escaped; but the manner in which the affair was managed greatly incensed the Chief Commissioner. For, in plain words, with Horse, Foot, and Artillery, we were beaten by part of a regiment of Sepoys. If we had quietly surrounded the village and attacked it in the cool of the evening, it is probable that not a man would ever have escaped from Jhelum.

Mutiny at Sealkote.

When tidings of the sharp resistance of the Fourteenth reached Sealkote, a still more disastrous state of things arose at that place. The station was commanded by Brigadier Frederick Brind, an Artillery officer of high repute—a man of lofty stature and large proportions, who had done good service in his time, and who was still amply endowed with physical and mental vigour. But seldom was man left by hard circumstances in a position which afforded so little scope for the display of his power. The cantonment had been stripped of European troops for the formation of the Movable Column, and there were

1857. July 8.

nearly a thousand Native soldiers—Horse and Foot—all armed and ready for action.* In such circumstances a commanding office has no choice to make—no discretion to exercise. He must appear to trust his men whether he does or not; for to betray suspicion is surely to precipitate an outbreak. So to all outward appearance Brind had full confidence in his men, and as time went on the quietude of their demeanour seemed to justify more than the pretence. But when, on the 8th of July, the Lines of Sealkote were all astir with the tidings that the Fourteenth at Jhelum had been in action with the white troops, who had attempted to disarm them, it was felt by our people that the beginning of the end had come. And there was another source of excitement on that evening, for a messenger had come from Delhi, bringing a summons from the King commanding them to join the Royal Army. The night was, therefore, one of preparation. On the morning of the 9th everything was ready.

Sealkote was a large, and had been an important military station. In quiet times European troops had been stationed there in large numbers, with the usual results. There were good barracks and commodious houses and pleasant gardens, and more than the wonted number of English gentlewomen and young children. There were a church and a chapel, and other indications of the progress of western civilisation. When, therefore, the storm burst, there was much that lay at the mercy of the enemy, and on our side no possible means of defence. Before the

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* "Brigadier Brind protested against the European troops being entirely removed, and desired that two hundred and fifty should remain. In reply, he was requested to disarm. But, to the last, he shared in the belief (almost grievous) in the honour of the Sepoy."—*Cooper's Crisis in the Punjab.*

1857. July 9.

sound of the morning-gun had been heard throughout the cantonment, and our people, according to their wont, had mounted their horses or entered their carriages, to proceed to their wonted duties, or to take the air before the sun was high above the horizon, the Sepoys had planted picquets all round the place, to prevent the escape of the Feringhees. And presently the din and uproar of rebellion announced to our people, just waking from their slumbers, that the Sepoys had risen. Our officers were soon mounted and on their way to the parade-ground. The truth was then only too apparent. The troopers of the Ninth were already in their saddles, and the Forty-sixth were under arms. Our people were suddenly brought face to face with mutiny in its worst form. All circumstances and conditions were in the last degree unfavourable to the English. Sealkote was one of the great stations at which there had been a gathering of detachments from different regiments for the new rifle practice, and, therefore, great opportunities of conspiracy. It lay in proximity to the Jummoo territory of the Maharajah of Cashmere, who the Sepoys believed, and our authorities feared, would, in the hour of danger, forsake his alliance; and it was utterly without any defence of European troops. So when the hour came to strike, the confidence and audacity of the enemy had everything to foster and encourage them.

As ever, the Cavalry were foremost in the work of mutiny—foremost in their greed for blood. Mounted on good chargers, they could ride with rapidity from place to place, and follow the white men on horseback or in their carriages, and shoot them down as they rode. For weeks the outburst had been expected, and every English inhabitant of Sealkote had thought painfully over the coming crisis, and had calculated the best means of escape. The only place of safety for which they could make was the old Fort, once the stronghold of the Sikh Chief, Tej Singh, and to this, when they saw that nothing could be done to arrest the tide of rebellion, which was already at the flood, they endeavoured to make good their retreat. Some happily reached the Fort. Others perished on the way. A ball from the pistol of a mounted trooper entered the broad back of the Brigadier, and he was carried to the Fort only to die. The Superintending Surgeon, Graham, was shot dead in his buggy, as his daughter sat by his side.* Another medical officer of the same name was "killed in his carriage among his children." A Scotch missionary, named Hunter, on his way to the Fort in a carriage, with his wife and child, was attacked by some chuprassies of the gaol-guard, and all three were ruthlessly murdered. The Brigade-Major, Captain Bishop, was killed, in the presence of his family, under the very walls of the Fort. Some hid themselves during the day, and escaped discovery and death almost by a miracle. Some were preserved by their own men, and concealed till nightfall in the Lines. The officers of the Forty-sixth, who had remained with their men 1857. July 9.

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* His daughter escaped. She was dragged to the Cavalry Guard, where she "found Colonel and Mrs. Lorne Campbell surrounded by a few faithful troopers, who conducted them in safety to the Fort."—There is a significant commentary on this incident in one of Herbert Edwardes's letters to John Lawrence: "These individual stories convey better notions than public despatches. In ordinary times India would have shuddered over Dr. Graham shot dead in his daughter's arms. Now, all we say is, 'What a wonderful escape Miss Graham has had!'" Habituated, after two months of mutiny and massacre, to horrors of this kind, the recital of them had ceased to create the intense sensations which they had once caused. And so, in this History, it will be observed, as it proceeds, that whilst the earlier tragedies, then novel and strange to the European mind, are dwelt upon in detail, some of the later ones are dismissed with the brevity of a telegraphic message. In this the narrative only reflects the varying temperature of the times.

1857. July 9. until the road between the Parade-ground and the Fort was closed by the enemy, rode off towards Gogranwallah, and reached that place, scorched and weary—but not hungry and athirst, for the villagers fed them on the way—after a mid-day journey of some forty miles. The personal incidents of that 9th of July at Sealkote would fill an interesting and exciting chapter. But there is nothing stranger in the story than the fact that two of our field officers—one, Colonel of a regiment—were invited to take command of the mutineers, and to lead them to Delhi, with a promise of high pay, and a significant pledge, not perhaps without a touch of irony in it, that they might always spend the hot weather on the Hills.

Whilst our people were seeking safety within the walls of the old Fort, and securing their position by strengthening its defences, the Sepoy mutineers were revelling in the work of spoliation with the congenial companionship of the criminal classes. The old story, so often already told, and still to be told again and again, was repeated here: the mutineers made for the Gaol, released the prisoners, plundered the Treasury, destroyed the Cutcherry with all its records, blew up the magazines, and gutted the houses of the Christian inhabitants. If there were any special circumstance about the Sealkote insurrection, it was that the household servants of our English officers, generally faithful, or at least neutral, on these occasions, took an active part against their old masters. That they knew what was coming seems to be proved by the fact that the Brigadier's sirdar-bearer, or chief body servant, an "old and favourite" domestic, took the caps off his master's pistols in the night, as they

1857. July 9.

lay beside him while he slept.* And how thoroughly they cast in their lot with the soldiery is demonstrated with equal distinctness by the fact that they afterwards fought against us, the Brigadier's khansaman, or butler, taking an active part in operations which will be presently described. There seems to have been perfect cohesion between all classes of our enemies—the mutineers, the criminals from the gaols, the "Goojurs" from the neighbouring villages, and the servants from the houses and bungalows of the English. From sunrise to sunset the work went on bravely. Everything that could be carried off by our enemies was seized and appropriated; even the old station-gun, which morning and evening had proclaimed the hours of uprising and down-setting. And nearly everything belonging to us, that could not be carried off, was destroyed and defaced, except—a strange and unaccountable exception—the Church and Chapel, which the Christians had reared for the worshipping of the Christian's God.

Before nightfall, all this rabble had made off for the Ravee river, on their way to Delhi, rejoicing in

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* This might be supposed to have arisen merely from the instinct of self-preservation if it had not been for the after-conduct of these domestics. It is certain that, in many parts of the country, the Native servants were in a state of deadly fear lest their enraged masters, seeking objects for their revenge, should turn upon them and kill them. There is an anecdote illustrative of this, almost too good to be an invention. It is said that a gentleman in Calcutta, observing one day a strange table-servant waiting at dinner, asked him who he was and how he came there. His answer was, "Hum budlee hain, sahib" ("I am a substitute"); and he explained that he had come to take the place temporarily of a member of the establishment who was sick,—a common practice in Anglo-Indian domestic life. A few days afterwards the old servant returned to his work, looking very sleek and well; and when his master questioned him as to the cause of his absence, he naively replied that he had received secret information that, on a given day just passed, the sahib-logue intended to shoot all their Native servants, in the middle of dinner, and that, therefore, he had thought it prudent to send a "budlee" to be shot in his place.

1857. July 9—10.

and excited by, their day's work. It was a delightful relief to the inmates of the decayed old Fort, who now thought that if the danger were not wholly past, at least the worst of it was over. It has been said that they "slept more soundly and fearlessly than they had slept for weeks before. The mine had exploded and they had escaped."* It is often so; the agony of suspense is greater than that of the dreaded reality. But there was one there to whom no such relief was to be given. The Brigadier lay dying. A true soldier to the last, he had, whilst the death-pangs were upon him, issued his orders for the defence of the Fort, and for what little else could be done in that extremity. But the ball from the trooper's pistol had done its work, and though Brind lingered through the night, he died before the sun had risen; and all felt that a brave man and a capable officer was lost to the country, which he had so well served.

Nicholson and the Movable Column.

The triumph of the Sealkote Mutineers was but brief. Retribution followed closely on their victory. On the 22nd of June, Colonel John Nicholson, with the rank of Brigadier-General, had taken command of the Movable Column. That so young an officer should be appointed to such a command, in defiance of what were called the "claims" of many officers in the Division of longer standing and higher rank, was an innovation by no means grateful to the Departments or to the Seniority-mongers in the service, but it startled many with a pleasurable surprise, and to some it was a source of infinite rejoicing. Elderly men with elderly wives, who had never heard of such a thing before, affected to think that there was no great wisdom in the appointment, and showed their contempt by talking of Mister Nicholson. Of this the young General could afford to speak tenderly. "I fear," he wrote to Edwardes on the 17th of June, "that my nomination will give great offence to the senior Queen's officers, but I shall do all in my power to get on well with them. I feel so sorry for the disappointment they must experience, that I think I shall be able to put up with a great deal of coldness without taking offence." But among the younger officers of the Army, especially among those in the Movable Column, the selection was most popular. The exigencies of the General Staff having taken Chamberlain to Delhi, there was not a man in the Army whose selection would have been more welcome to those who meant work, and were resolute to do it. When Edwardes wrote to John Lawrence, saying, "You have been very vigorous in pushing down reinforcements, and those appointments of Chamberlain and Nicholson are worth armies in this crisis. . . . Amid the ruins of the Regular Army these two Irregular Pillars stand boldly up against the sky, and I hope the Tomnoddies will admire their architecture," he expressed the sentiments of all the bolder spirits in the Army, eager to be led, not by age and rank, but by lusty manhood in its prime, and who could see better hope for a glorious deliverance even in the rashness and audacity of youth than in the irresolution and inactivity of senile command. It was truly a great day for India, when it was decreed that Chamberlain should go down to Delhi and Nicholson place himself at the head of the Movable Column in the Punjab.

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* Cave-Browne's "Punjab and Delhi."

1857.
June—July.

The force of which Brigadier-General Nicholson took command consisted of Her Majesty's Fifty-second Light Infantry; a troop of European Horse Artillery,

1857. June—July.

under Major Dawes, an excellent officer, who had done good service in the Afghan war; a Horse Battery, also European, under Major George Bourchier; the Thirty-third* and Thirty-fifth Sepoy Regiments; and a wing of the Ninth Cavalry. He joined the force at Jullundhur, and moved thence to Phillour, as though he had been marching down upon Delhi. Then some people shook their heads and wondered what he was doing in thus carrying down with him many hundreds of Sepoys, with rebellion in their hearts, only to swell the host of the enemy. What he was really doing was soon apparent. He was intent on disarming the Native regiments. But as this was to be best accomplished by secrecy and suddenness, he did not blazon his design about the Camp. But in good time, the necessary instructions were given. On the morning of the 25th of June, the Column was under the walls of the fort of Phillour. The guns were drawn up on the road and unlimbered, the Fifty-second taking post on both flanks. The Sepoy Regiments marched on, little dreaming of what was to come. Nicholson had given orders to the Police that, on the first sound of firing, the bridge across the river should be cut away, so as to prevent all chance of escape if the Sepoys should break and fly with their arms in their hands. Leaning over one of Bourchier's guns, he said to that officer, "If they bolt, you follow as hard as you can; the bridge will have been destroyed, and we shall have a second Sobraon on a small scale."† But the Sepoys did not bolt. In the presence of those guns, they felt that it would be madness to resist the

Disarming of the Thirty-third and Thirty-fifth Regiments.

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* The Thirty-third, which had been stationed at Hooshyapoor, joined the column near Phillour.

† Bourchier's *Eight Months' Campaign.*

order; so they sullenly piled their arms at the word of command. 1857. July.

Having disarmed the two Infantry regiments, Nicholson determined to retrace his steps from Phillour, and to pitch his camp at Umritsur. On the 5th he was at that place, the central position of which recommended itself to him, as it enabled him to afford speedy aid, if required, either to Lahore or the Jullundhur Doab, while at the same time it overawed the Maunjha, and rendered hopeless any attempt to mutiny on the part of the Fifty-ninth Regiment stationed in the cantonment.* On the morning of the 7th, the stirring news of the mutiny of the Fourteenth at Jhelum reached his Camp, and he hoped hour after hour to be comforted by the tidings that Colonel Ellice had defeated and destroyed them. But the day passed, and the night also was spent, and still the wished-for intelligence did not come, but in its place were ominous tidings of disaster; so on the morning of the 9th, Nicholson, with reluctance which he frankly expressed,† proceeded to disarm the Fifty-ninth. There was a punishment parade that morning. A rebel or a deserter was to be executed, and all the troops, European and Native, were ordered out to witness the ceremony. The ground selected lay between the city and the fort, about a mile from the cantonment, and there the regiments and the guns were drawn up on parade, and the ghastly ceremony was duly performed. This done, the Sepoys of the Fifty-ninth, who only the

Disarming of the Fifty-ninth.

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* Brigadier-General Nicholson to the Adjutant-General of the Army, July 19, 1857.

† "I feel bound to place on record my belief that both in conduct and feeling this regiment was quite an exceptional one. It had neither committed itself in any way, nor do I believe that up to the day it was disarmed it had any intention of committing itself; and I very deeply regret that even as a precautionary measure it should have become my duty to disarm it."—*Ibid.*

1857. July.

day before had been complimented on their loyalty, were ordered to lay down their arms. Though surprised and bewildered by the command, they obeyed without a murmur; and though many men of the Regiment were not present on parade, and, therefore, a quantity of arms were still left in possession of the Sepoys, they testified the sincerity of their obedience by afterwards voluntarily surrendering them.

Disarming of the Fifty-eighth.

Thus were the teeth of another Native regiment quietly drawn, and the danger glaring at us from the ranks of our own Sepoys was greatly diminished. Elsewhere the same process, as Nicholson now learnt, was going on with more or less success. At Rawul-Pindee were the Fifty-eighth Regiment and two companies of the Fourteenth—the regiment which had fought so desperately at Jhelum. A letter from Sir John Lawrence announced that the business of disarming had been done, but in no very satisfactory manner. "We have disarmed," the Chief Commissioner wrote to Nicholson on the 7th, "the seven companies of the Fifty-eighth and the two companies of the Fourteenth. We had three guns and two hundred and forty Europeans, and were very nearly having a fight. The main body broke and bolted to their lines, and we did not fire on them. After about an hour's work, however, during which a good many loaded, we got all but about thirty to lay down their arms. The latter bolted, and about half were killed or taken by the Police Sowars. Miller was badly wounded a little above the right wrist; both bones were broken. He had a narrow escape. A Sepoy gave him a dig in the chest with his bayonet, but somehow or other the wound was slight." At the same time Edwardes was reporting the entire success of his arrangement for the disarming of the Sepoys of

1857.

Disarming of the Twenty-fourth.

the Twenty-fourth at Fort Mackeson.* By the help of Brougham's mountain guns and some detachments of the Punjab Irregular Force this was accomplished without a hindrance or a hitch; and the disarmed Sepoys were marched into Peshawur, escorted by Brougham's guns, whilst the Fort was garrisoned by some Mooltanee levies, horse and foot. Nothing could have been more adroitly managed than the whole affair.

Movements of Nicholson's Column.

But tidings more exciting than these were to reach the ears of the Commander of the Movable Column. The telegraph wires brought news from Lahore that the Sepoys at Sealkote had risen, and that rapine and murder were abroad in the place; another half-hour, and the story was confirmed by a musician of the Forty-sixth, who had ridden in with a few blurred lines from Assistant-Commissioner M'Mahon, begging him to bring the Force to their aid.† Nicholson could now no longer hesitate about disarming the wing of the Ninth Cavalry attached to his column. He had hitherto abstained lest such an act should precipitate the rising at Sealkote, and now the wing at

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* "As day dawned, the two parties from north and south closed in upon the Fort, and threw a chain of horsemen round it, whilst Major Brougham drew up his guns so as to command the gateway. Major Shakespear, commanding the Twenty-fourth Regiment, and Gun Staff-officer, Lieutenant Hovenden, of the Engineers, then rode into the Fort, and ordered the Sepoys to parade outside. They were much surprised and confused, but made no resistance, and when ordered by Major Shakespear, piled their arms and gave up their belts and pouches in an orderly manner."—*Edwardes to Cotton, July* 8, 1857. *MS. Correspondence.*

† The note, the original of which is before me, is significant in its brevity: "The troops here are in open mutiny. Jail broke. Brigadier wounded. Bishop killed. Many have escaped to the Fort. Bring the Movable Column at once, if possible. 6½ A.M., 9th July." The name of the bearer of this chit ought not to be omitted. Mr. Cave-Browne says, "A young band-boy, named M'Douglas, of the Forty-sixth, had galloped off from the regimental parade-ground on a little tat (pony), and by dint of borrowing and seizing fresh ones in the villages as he passed through, he finished his ride of some eighty miles into Umritsur, and hastened to the General's quarters just as the mail-cart brought in the message from Lahore."

1857. July.

that place was in the fulness of rebellion. Their arms and horses, therefore, were now to be taken from them. The troopers felt that resistance could only bring destruction upon them, so they quietly gave up all that made them soldiers; and then Nicholson prepared himself to march. As the day wore on, fresh tidings of the movements of the Sealkote mutineers reached him. It was obvious that they were marching down on Goordaspore, intent probably on stirring up the Second Irregular Cavalry stationed there, and, joined by them, on plundering the station. Thence Nicholson believed that they would make their way, by the route of Noorpoor and Hooshyapore—at which places they might reinforce themselves with Horse and Foot*—to Jullundhur, and thence march, a strong body of mutineers, down to Delhi. To frustrate this expected movement was now the desire of the Commander of the Movable Column. He was forty miles from Goordaspore, and the Sepoys had two days' start of him. But Nicholson was born to overcome difficulties which would have beaten down other men. He determined on a forced march to Goordaspore, and went resolutely to work to accomplish it. The July sun blazed down upon his camp with a ferocity more appalling than the malice of the enemy. But even that was to be disregarded. Whatsoever the country could yield in the shape of carriages, horses, and ponies was at once enlisted into the service of the Column.†

The March to Goordaspore.

July 10.

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* The Fourth Native Infantry was at Noorpore. The Sixteenth Irregular Cavalry at Hooshyapore.

† Great praise is due to the civil authorities for their activity in this conjuncture. Mr. Montgomery, in his official report, says: "To the commercial men of Umritsur and Lahore the metalled road offers special advantages, for it enables hundreds of native gigs or ekas to fly unceasingly between the two cities. On the day I allude to the district officers of both places were ordered so seize every eka, bylee, and pony that was to be seen, and to despatch them, under police guards, to General Nicholson's camp at Umritsur, on

1857. July 11.

All possible advantage was taken of the coolness of the night; but when morning came they were still some fifteen or sixteen miles from Goordaspore, with the prospect of a sultry march before them.* With all his care and labour, Nicholson had not, even with the aid of the troop-horses of the Ninth, been able to mount the whole of his force, and some weary foot-sore work was therefore a necessity of the conjuncture. So, many were struck down by the heat; yet, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, they pushed forward in excellent spirits, and even with a strong enjoyable sense of the humourous side of the service they were performing.† It was not until the evening of the 11th that the whole of the force was assembled at Goordaspore. There intelligence was received that the mutineers from Sealkote were then at Noorkote, some fifteen miles from the right hand of the Ravee. There were two courses then open to Nicholson. He might dispute the pas-

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urgent public service. These vehicles, on their arrival there, were promptly loaded with British soldiers, and the force started at dusk for Goordaspore, which is at a distance of forty-four miles from Umritsur, reaching it at three P.M. of July 11. It was joined at Battala by Mr. Roberts, Commissioner, and Captain Perkins, Assistant-Commissioner at Umritsur."

* Colonel Bourchier ("Eight Months' Campaign") says that they made twenty-six miles in the night, and had then eighteen miles before them. But General Nicholson, in his official report, says that the entire distance was "over forty-one miles," some three miles less than Bourchier's computation.

† Colonel Bourchier, in his narrative, gives the following amusing account of the humours of the march: "Yet, under these circumstances, trying as they were, the spirit of fun was not extinct. The Artillery made extemporary awnings of branches of trees over their gun-carriages and waggons, giving them the appearance of carts 'got up' for a day at Hampstead; officers, crowned with wreaths of green leaves, were 'chaffed' by their comrades for adopting head-dresses à la Norma. Here might be seen a soldier on a rampant pony, desiring his companion, on a similar beast, to keep behind and be his 'edge de camp;' there a hero, mindful perhaps of Epping on Easter Monday, bellowing out his inquiries as to who had seen the fox (stag?) Privates, never intended for the mounted branch, here and there came to grief, and lay sprawling on mother-earth, while ever and anon some mighty Jehu in his *eka* dashed to the front at a pace a Roman charioteer would have envied."

1857. July 12.

sage of the river, or he might draw them on towards him, by remaining inactive and keeping the enemy ignorant of his position. He determined on the latter course, and much to the perplexity of some and the dissatisfaction of others, remained quiescent at Goordaspore till nine o'clock on the following morning. Then he learnt that the enemy were crossing the river by a ford about nine miles distant, at a place known as the Trimmoo Ghaut; so he prepared at once to fling himself upon them.

The Trimmoo Ghaut affair.

At noon he was in sight of his prey, about a mile from the river. The mutineers had crossed over with their baggage, and the grey jackets of the videttes of the Ninth Cavalry were first seen flitting about in our front, and then the Infantry were observed drawn up in line, their right resting on a serai and a dismantled mud fort, and their left on a small village and cluster of trees, with parties of Cavalry on each flank. Nicholson now made his dispositions for the attack. Eager to get his guns within short range of the enemy, he masked his advancing batteries with bodies of mounted Police, and moved on to within six hundred yards of the mutineers, when the Cavalry, excited to the utmost by the artificial stimulant of *bang*, rushed furiously to the encounter, some shouting, some gnashing their teeth. On this Nicholson unmasked one of his batteries, and the maskers went rapidly to the rear.* It was a moment of doubt and anxiety, especially with the Artillery commanders, whose Native drivers might have deserted them at a critical moment, for they had been acquainted at

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* Nicholson himself speaks very gently and forbearingly of this rearward movement of the Police Ressalahs: "The Police," he says, "being no longer useful as maskers, and seeming undesirous of engaging, were ordered to the rear." Colonel Bourchier says that they ran away. "Away scampered the mounted levies back to Goordaspore."

Sealkote with the very Sepoys against whom they had now been brought. One half of the old Brigade was, indeed, fighting against the other. But the suspected men were as true to their salt in the Punjab as they were at Delhi.* The guns were brought into action without a hitch, and the enemy, though they fought steadily and well, and sent in a volley from the whole line with the precision of a parade, staggered beneath the fire of our batteries, upon which some of the men of the Forty-sixth flung themselves with heroic courage. The grape and shrapnel from our nine guns scattered death among the foremost of the mutineers; and presently the Enfield rifles of the Fifty-second began to give deadly proof that the smooth-bored muskets of the Sepoys were as playthings contending against them. Still there were some amongst them to be convinced only by the thrust of the bayonet. In truth, the enemy were terribly out-matched. With all their gallantry in doing and their fortitude in enduring, what could "Brown Bess" and the old station-gun do against our batteries and our rifles? The battle was soon over. The mutineers fell back upon the river, and Nicholson, whose want of Cavalry was severely felt, did all he could in pursuit; but could not inflict much damage upon them. It is said, however, that they had already left "between three and four hundred killed and wounded on the field." And all their baggage fell into our hands—arms, ammunition, clothing, and other plundered property, public and private, the spoil of the Sealkote cantonment.

1857. July 12.

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* Colonel Bourchier says: "I took the precaution to warn my European gunners to watch them. In the reply of my Farrier-Sergeant spoke the whole company: 'If they only attempt to run, sir, we'll cut off their heads.' But in this case, as in every other, my Native drivers nobly did their duty."

1857. July 12—16. There was nothing more to be done that day. The mid-day heat had completely exhausted our European fighting men, so, whilst a party of Punjab Infantry was left to guard the ford and protect the baggage, the Fifty-second and the Artillery were marched back to Goordaspore. But the day's fighting had resulted in a "conclusion where nothing is concluded," so conclusions were to be tried again. The Sepoy force was shattered, but not destroyed. Their fighting power was not yet gone. Perhaps the energy that sustained them was the energy of desperation; for to fall back was as perilous to them as to stand still. There was no security for them in any direction. They had not more than half the number that first marched down to the Ravee; but they were brave and resolute men, and, even with such fearful odds against them, they did not shrink from another conflict. The river had risen, and that which had been a ford had now become an island. The old station-gun which they had brought from Sealkote was their sole piece of artillery, and they had no gunners with their force; but the Brigadier's old "khansaman" had lived for too many years at Artillery stations not to have a shrewd conception of the manner of working a gun. And thus planted on the island in the middle of the Ravee, they thought that, for a time at least, they might defy us. The river had ceased to be fordable, and the civil authorities, as a precautionary measure, had sunk all the boats in the immediate neighbourhood. So, when Nicholson again advanced from Goordaspore, he could do little more in the first instance than take up a position out of reach of the enemy's one gun and send to a distance for some boats. At daybreak
July 16. on the morning of the 16th, the desired means of

1857. July 16.

transport had been obtained, and he was prepared to attack the enemy on their insular stronghold. The Infantry crossed over one extremity of the island, a mile and a quarter from the enemy's position, whilst the Artillery took post so as to cover the advance of the column and to play upon the hostile gun.* The Sepoys were taken by surprise. Not until a large part of the Fifty-second had formed upon the island did the mutineers know that we had even obtained a boat. The Assembly was then sounded; the black troops mustered in haste and moved round their gun to sweep our advancing column. But the piece had been elevated for service at a longer range, and in the hurry of the moment the amateur artillerymen had failed to depress the screw, which was old and rusty, and not easily to be worked; so the shot went harmlessly over the heads of our people. On went the British Infantry, with Nicholson at their head; and though some, stern and steadfast to the last, stood to be shot down or bayoneted at their gun, the rout soon became general. Many were killed on the island; many were drowned in the river; and a few who escaped were given up by the people of the surrounding villages. These were afterwards tried by Special Commissions, and paid the penalty of their crimes on the gibbet.

Nicholson at Lahore.

The Movable Column then marched back to Umritsur; and Nicholson hastened to Lahore, whither Sir John Lawrence had already proceeded from Rawul-Pindee. The General was there on the 21st of July; on the 22nd, the Chief Commissioner wrote, through his secretary, to the Commander of the

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* Colonel Bourchier says that "to silence it at such a distance (twelve hundred yards), whilst it was nearly concealed by grass and an earthern breastwork, was almost impossible."

1857. July 22. Reinforcements for Delhi.

Delhi Force, that "the following troops were on their way to Delhi, or would immediately march:" "The Kumaon Battalion, about four hundred strong, which has passed Loodhianah, and ought to be at Delhi on the 4th or 5th of August; Her Majesty's Fifty-second from the Movable Column, now at Umritsur, six hundred bayonets; Mooltanee Horse, two hundred; and a nine-pounder battery. All these troops should be at Delhi by the 15th, and in an emergency might make double marches. General Nicholson will command the force." And then it was added: "The Chief Commissioner further proposes to despatch the troops marginally noted as quickly as possible, and all can be at Delhi by the end of August, some of them a good deal earlier. The Second Punjab Infantry and Wing of Her Majesty's Sixty-first ought to be there by the 15th proximo. The former is now on its way from Mooltan to Ferozepore, whence it will march on the arrival of the detachment of the Bombay Fusiliers, which left this place last night. The wing of the Belooch Battalion has not yet left Mooltan; but orders for its march have been despatched. The Fourth Punjab Regiment is at Peshawur, and will march in two or three days. It can hardly be at Delhi before the end of August. The Two Companies of Her Majesty's Eighth are holding Jullundhur and Phillour, and cannot be spared until relieved by a detachment of Her Majesty's Twenty-fourth, now on its way from Rawul-Pindee. Rothney's Sikhs are at Loodhianah, and will join Brigadier-General Nicholson *en route*. Lieutenant-Colonel Dawes's troop

Second Punjab Infantry	700
H.M.'s Sixty-first (a wing) . . .	400
Wing of Belooch Battalion . . .	400
Fourth Punjab Infantry	600
Two Companies of H.M.'s Eighth .	200
Detachment of Fourth Sikhs . .	100
Dawes's Troop of H. A..	100
	2500

1857. July 22.

will be sent or not, as you may desire. It is believed that light guns are not required at Delhi. All these troops are of excellent quality, fully equal, if not superior, to any that the Insurgents can bring against them, and comprise a force of four thousand two hundred men." // ~~Thus was~~ Lawrence, who did all things on the grand Titanic scale, still sending down his reinforcements by thousands to Delhi—thousands of Europeans and trustworthy Sikhs, with a young General, whose personal presence alone was worth a Brigade of Horse, Foot, and Artillery. / From [illegible] etc.

July 24. The Column ordered to Delhi.

On the 24th of July, Nicholson returned to Camp. His arrival had been anxiously awaited, for doubt and uncertainty were in all men's minds. Speculation had been rife, and all sorts of rumours of the future movements of the force had been circulated among them. Few had ventured to hope that the order would be given to them to march down to Delhi; for the general feeling was that the Punjab had already been so stripped of European troops that it could not afford to divest itself of another regiment or another battery. But Nicholson had returned to the column with the joyous tidings that they were to set their faces towards the scene of the great struggle. "Our only fear," wrote an officer of the Force, "was that Delhi would fall before we could possibly arrive there." But all felt that if any one could take them down in time to participate in the crowning operations of the siege, Nicholson was the man to do it. He was not one to lose an hour. On the following day the column crossed the Beeas, moved down by forced marches to the Sutlej, and thence pushing on with all speed to the Jumna. At Bara, on the 3rd of August, Nicholson received a letter from General Wilson, saying, "The enemy have re-esta-

1857. August 6—7. blished the bridge over the Nujufgurh Canal (which we had destroyed) and have established themselves in force there, with the intention of moving on Alipore and our communications to the rear. I, therefore, earnestly beg you to push forward with the utmost expedition in your power, both to drive these fellows from my rear, and to aid me in holding my position." On the 6th, Nicholson was at Umballah, whence he wrote, "I am just starting post for Delhi by General Wilson's desire. The column should be at Kurnaul the day after to-morrow, and I shall, perhaps, rejoin it at Paneeput."

Nicholson at Delhi.

On the following day he stood upon the Delhi Ridge looking down at the great city, taking in all the wonderful suggestiveness of the scene with that quiet, thoughtful, self-contained solemnity of mien, which distinguished him from all his cotemporaries. He had much then to think of in this little breathing-space—much of the past, much of the future. The time which had elapsed since his first appointment to the command of the Movable Column had not been without certain personal annoyances, which even in the midst of the stirring work around him he had not been wholly able to brush aside. It was scarcely possible that, in the position in which he was placed, a man of Nicholson's peculiar character should, on no occasion, give offence to higher authority. It was his nature to steer straight on to independent action; to "scorn the consequence and to do the thing." And so it happened that those above him thought that he was taking too much upon himself, and that he was grievously deficient in those references and explanations which Officialism, in ordinary times, not improperly demands. Even Sir John Lawrence, most emphatically a man of action,

1857. August 7.

was somewhat disturbed by the fact that Nicholson had disarmed the Thirty-third and Thirty-fifth regiments without previously consulting the Chief-Commissioner, or very promptly explaining to him the "reason why." But afterwards, with the unfailing frankness which relieved all that was outwardly stern and harsh in his nature, he admitted that he "could not expect Nicholson, after knocking about in the sun all day, to write long yarns." "On such occasions," he added, "a line or two semi-officially will satisfy me, until I get your formal report; all I want to know is, what is done and the reason." But no sooner had this little difference with the Commissioner been smoothed down, than another and more serious one arose between the Commander of the Movable Column and the General commanding the Division. Nicholson had taken upon himself to move troops, under the command of the latter, without consulting him, and had been so severely rebuked, that he declared that nothing but the thought of the public inconvenience, which might result from such a step, restrained him from throwing up his appointment. These wounds were still fresh, when he reached Delhi and asked himself whether it were likely that, in the work which lay before him, he would be able wholly to avoid collisions with his fellow-workmen. He felt that much had been done of which he could not approve, and that much had been left undone which he would have earnestly counselled; and he knew that all this might come over again, and that his resolute freedom of speech and independence of action might bring forth much that would be painful to himself and embarrassing to others. But he had written a few days before to Sir John Lawrence, saying: "I might have preserved

1857. August 7.

silence, but when in a great crisis an officer holds a strong opinion on any matters of consequence, I think he fails in his duty if he does not speak it out, at whatever risk of giving offence."* And now he was determined that, cost him what it might, he would suffer his convictions to declare themselves without restraint, regardless of everything but the good of the Empire.

His coming had been eagerly looked for in Camp. As day after day tidings of the rapid approach of the Movable Column, under Nicholson, were brought in, men began to see clearly before them the consummation of the final assault, and their hearts were gladdened by the prospect. The approach of this column was, indeed, as the promise of a great deliverance; and when it was whispered through the camp that Nicholson had already arrived, it was as a cordial to men's souls, for a great reputation had preceded him, and it was felt among our people that a mighty warrior had come among them, who was destined to lead our troops into Delhi, and to crush the power of the Mogul. His personal presence did much to generate in men's minds the sublime idea of a Hero—a King of Men; of the Megistos who was to reign among them. He had come on in advance, by Wilson's request, to take counsel with him; and he was soon passing from picquet to picquet, taking in with a soldier's eye all the points of our position, and looking down critically upon the defences of the enemy. He did not at once make his way into the hearts of men, but he impressed all with a sense of power. On the evening of the 7th of August, on which day he arrived in Camp, he dined at the Head-Quarters Mess, and the silent solemnity of his demeanour was unpleasantly apparent to men whose habitual cheerfulness, when they met together for the social meal, had been one of the sustaining influences of Camp Life, during all that long dreary season of waiting and watching. Next morning, accompanied by Norman, he visited the great position at Hindoo Rao's house, which for two long months had borne the brunt of the enemy's attacks. Baird Smith at that time was in consultation with Reid.* The brave commander of the Picquet, who had done such good service, could not help inwardly resenting Nicholson's imperious manner. But when, after the visitor had passed on, Reid complained to

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* See the following extract from a letter written to Sir John Lawrence from Umballah, August 6. Lawrence had written to Nicholson, saying, half-seriously, half-jestingly, that he was incorrigible, and suggesting that he might do more good by carrying others with him than by running counter to them. To this Nicholson had replied: "I am very sorry to hear that General Gowan has taken offence again. I don't wish to ignore him or any other superior; I dislike offending any one, and, except on principle, would never have a disagreement. You write as if I were in the habit of giving offence. Now I cannot call to mind that since my return to India, upwards of five years and a half ago, I have had any misunderstandings, except with —— and ——. The former, I believe, is conscious that he did me wrong, and I trust the latter will eventually make the same admission. . . . I fear that I must have given offence to you, too, on the Rawul-Pindee question. I can truly say that I opposed my opinion to yours with great reluctance, and had the matter been one of less importance, I might have preserved silence; but when in a great crisis an officer holds a strong opinion on any matter of consequence, I think he fails in his duty if he does not speak it out, at whatever risk of giving offence."

1857. August 7.

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* The following description is from the "History of the Siege of Delhi:" "About this time a stranger of very striking appearance was remarked visiting all our picquets, examining everything, and making most searching inquiries about their strength and history. His attire gave no clue to his rank; it evidently never cost the owner a thought. Moreover, in those anxious times every one went as he pleased; perhaps no two officers were dressed alike. It was soon made out that this was General Nicholson, whose person was not yet known in Camp, and it was whispered, at the same time, that he was possessed of the most brilliant military genius. He was a man cast in a giant mould, with massive chest and powerful limbs, and an expression ardent and commanding, with a dash of roughness; features of stern beauty, a long black beard, and deep sonorous voice. There was something of immense strength, talent, and resolution in his whole gait and manner, and a power of ruling men on high occasions that no one could escape noticing."

1857. Aug. 7—12. his companion of Nicholson's haughty, overbearing style of address, the Chief Engineer answered, "Yes, but that wears off; you will like him better when you have seen more of him." And never were words of good omen more surely verified, for afterwards they became "the best friends"—bound together by an equal desire to do their duty to their country, and, if God willed it, to die the soldier's death.

Eager to be at his work, Nicholson made ready offer of his column to perform any service that might be required on its first arrival. He saw at once that there was something to be done. The enemy had established themselves at a place on the left of our position, known as Ludlow Castle, and had planted a battery there, from which they contrived greatly to harass our picquets, especially that known as the "Metcalfe Picquet;" and it was desirable in the extreme to dislodge them. This attack upon the enemy's new position Nicholson would have gladly undertaken. But the activity of the mutineers was so great, and their fire was so annoying, that it was found to be inexpedient to wait for the arrival of the Movable Column. The work was to be done at once, and Brigadier Showers, a right good soldier, always cool and collected in the midst of danger and difficulty, was commissioned to do it.

August 12. Affair of Ludlow Castle. Before daybreak on the morning of the 12th, Showers led down his men, along the Flag-staff Road, upon Ludlow Castle. Covered by the darkness, they marched quietly on, and took the enemy completely by surprise. A rattling fire of musketry roused them from their sleep, and numbers were shot down, scared and bewildered, before they could realise what was upon them. The Golundauze rushed

1857. August 12.

confusedly to the battery; but our attack was so sudden and impetuous, that they could hardly fire a shot before the First Fusiliers were among them, bayoneting the brave fellows at their guns. Many, unable to work their pieces, drew their swords, and with their backs against the wall, sold their lives as dearly as they could. Masters of the battery, our men pushed on, in the grey dawn of the morning, following the mutineers into the houses, where they had endeavoured to find shelter, and shot them down like beasts in a cage. Some cried for mercy, and were answered with a laugh and a bayonet-thrust. By sunrise the work had been done. The enemy had been driven from Ludlow Castle, and four of their six guns had been taken. The victory, however, had been dearly purchased. The intrepid leader of the assailing party had fallen severely wounded; and Coke, who had led the Punjabees to the attack, had shared the same fate. It was in the confusion attending the fall of Showers that two of the enemy's guns were suffered to escape; and when Colonel Edward Greathed was afterwards sent to bring the force out of action, he did not know that these trophies of victory were to be recovered, or we may be sure that he would not have returned without them. Enough, however, had been gained to make the return to Camp a triumphal one. To secure the success of the surprise, the expedition had been rendered as secret as possible. When, therefore, the sound of the firing broke through the morning stillness the British Camp was aroused, and men wondered what was the meaning of it. The truth was soon apparent to them, and then numbers went out to meet the returning force, and welcomed them, as they came

1857. in with the captured guns, rejoicing exceedingly that so good a day's work had been done before the breaking of the morning's fast.*

Arrival of the Movable Column. August 14. It may with truth, I think, be said, that at this point of the long and weary siege the great turning-point was attained. The siege-train, which was to remedy our deplorable want of heavy ordnance, was labouring down from Ferozepore; and on the 14th of August, Nicholson, who had ridden back to meet his column, marched into the Delhi Camp at the head of his men. It was a sight to stir the spirits of the whole Camp. Our people turned out joyously to welcome the arrival of the new comers; and the gladsome strains of our military bands floated down to the rebel city with a menace in every note. Braced with action, flushed with victory, Nicholson was eager for new exploits. And he did not wait long for an opportunity to demonstrate to the Delhi Force that they had not over-estimated the great qualities of the Punjabee warrior. The enemy had gained tidings of the approach of our siege-train from Ferozepore, and they had determined to send out a strong force to intercept it. No more welcome task could have been assigned to Nicholson than that of cutting this force to pieces. A well-chosen, well-equipped force of all arms was told off for this service, under his command; and, with full assurance of victory, he prepared himself for the encounter.

August 25. Battle of Nujufgurh. In the early morning of the 25th of August, amidst heavy rain, the force marched out of Camp, and took the road to Nujufgurh, in which direction it was believed that the Bareilly and Neemuch Brigades of the Rebel Force had moved on the preceding day. It was a toilsome, and, for some time, a dispiriting march; for the road, little better than a bullock-track at best, was sometimes lost altogether in swamps and floods. At many points our gun-wheels sank in the mud up to their axles, and needed all the strength of the Artillerymen to extricate them from the slough. The Infantry, slipping and sliding on the slimy soil, could scarcely make good their footing, and toiled on laboriously, wet to the skin, and draggled with dirt; whilst the horses of the Cavalry struck up the mud blindingly into the troopers' faces; and the camels, ever so serviceably adroit on arid soil, sprawled hopelessly in the mire, and often fell with their burdens by the way. Many a lusty oath was sworn on that morning; but if temper was lost, hope and heart remained; and when, after a halt, and some renovation of exhausted nature, news came that they were upon the track of the enemy, and would soon be amongst them, the difficulties of the road diminished, or appeared to diminish, and they moved on with cheerful eagerness. The sun was sinking when our leading column espied the enemy, and at the same time came upon a stream, which the rains had flooded into the depth and dimension of a river. The mutineers were posted along the line of Nicholson's advance, to the left. Divided into three bodies, they occupied two villages and a serai in front of them—all protected by guns. As our troops passed the ford—the water even there breast-high—the enemy opened upon the British column with a shower of shot and shell from the serai. But advancing steadily under this fire, Nicholson took in the situation with his quick soldier's eye, forecast the action in his mind, and when his force had crossed the

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* Hervey Greathed says, that on this occasion we lost nineteen men killed, and ninety-four wounded. He adds: "Nobody would have supposed the force had suffered at all, from the jolly way in which they marched back, except for seeing the litters."

1857.
August 25.

1857. August 25. water, at once made his dispositions. The foremost point of attack, and the most perilous, was the serai. Against this Nicholson determined to fling the strength of his European troops, whilst he provided for the attack of the villages by other components of his force. Then, having ordered the Sixty-first and the Fusiliers to lie down, so as to be clear of the enemy's fire, he drew himself up in his stirrups, and addressed his men. He told the Sixty-first that they knew well what Sir Colin Campbell had said at Chilianwallah, and what he had again told the Highland Brigade before the battle of the Alma. "I have now," he said, "the same words to say to you, and to you, my friends of the Fusiliers. Hold your fire till you are within twenty or thirty yards of the enemy, then pour your volleys into them, give them a bayonet-charge, and the serai is yours." Then Tombs and Remington opened a smart fire on the serai; and up the Infantry sprang with a ringing cheer, and, sinking ankle-deep in the swampy ground, steadily advanced, Nicholson at their head, in the face of a shower of grape and musketry. Then holding back their fire—the hardest of all possible tasks—they carried the serai, and captured the guns.*

But the resistance was resolute, the conflict desperate. The heroism which was displayed by our people was emulated by the enemy. The Sepoys fought well, and sold their lives dearly. There was a sanguinary hand-to-hand encounter. Many of the gunners and the drivers were bayoneted, or cut down in the battery, and those who escaped limbered up and

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* "Poor Gabbett of the 61st, a fine brave soldier, twenty yards in advance of his men, made a rush on one of the guns; his foot slipped, and he was bayoneted by a gigantic Pandy; but Captain Trench, of the 35th N.I., who was A.D.C. to General Nicholson (that moment rising from the ground, his horse having been shot under him), quickly avenged his death by bringing down the rebel with his revolver."—*Cave Browne.*

1857.
August 25.

made, in hot haste, for the bridge crossing the Nujufgurh Canal. But the attacking party pressed closely upon them. The swampy state of the ground was fatal to the retreat. The leading gun stuck fast in the morass, and impeded the advance of those in the rear. Then our pursuing force fell upon them, and before they had made good their retreat, captured thirteen guns and killed eight hundred of their fighting men.*

In the mean while, the Punjabees, having swept on to the attack of the village on the right, and gallantly cleared it, crossed over by the rear to do like service on the other village, against which a brisk fire of artillery had been directed; but here they met with a stubborn resistance. Lumsden, who led them to the attack, was shot down; and not until a party of the Sixty-first had been sent in support, were the despairing energies of the mutineers suppressed. Night had by this time fallen upon the scene. Nicholson was master of the Field, and the enemy were in panic-flight. But our circumstances were not cheering. Our baggage had not come up, and our people were compelled, hungry, weary, and soaked as they were, to bivouac in a morass, without food, or anything to console and sustain them, except the thought of the victory they had gained. Next morning, having collected their spoil, and blown up the Nujufgurh bridge, they commenced their march back to Delhi, carrying their trophies with them. It was ascertained afterwards that it was the Neemuch Brigade which Nicholson had thus routed. The Bareilly Brigade had not come up to take part in the action. It was a mortifying reflection to the

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* The enemy had four guns at the serai, three at each of the villages, and three at the bridge over the canal.

1857. August 26. British leader that this information had not been communicated to him at an earlier period. "I do not exaggerate," he wrote afterwards to Sir John Lawrence, "when I say that had I had a decent political officer with me to get me a little information, I might have smashed the Bareilly Brigade at Palum, the next day. As it was, I had no information—not even a guide that I did not pick up for myself on the road; and had I obeyed my instructions, and gone to Behauder-gurh, the expedition would have been a fruitless one. I feel very thankful for my success; for had these two brigades succeeded in getting into our rear, they would undoubtedly have done much mischief."

The news of the victory, first conveyed to Delhi by young Low, Nicholson's aide-de-camp, who had ridden on in advance of the returning force, caused great rejoicing in Camp, and there was strong desire to give the victors an ovation as they marched in with their trophies. But Nicholson's men were weary and in sorry plight for any needless spectacular display, so they made all haste to their quarters, and as evening had closed in upon them before the whole force had arrived, the ovation would have been impossible, if they had been inclined to receive it. But there were hearty congratulations next day freely tendered to Nicholson, who had done his work right well, and secured the safe advance of the siege-train. It was believed, too, that he had weakened the enemy's force, not merely to the number of those who were killed and wounded in action, for the whole brigade was broken and dispersed, and many never again showed their faces in Delhi.* Since the battle of

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* "According to all accounts, the Neemuch Brigade (the one I dealt with) only numbers six hundred men now. Many of those who fled would

Budlee-ka-serai on the 8th of June, the English at Delhi had gained no such victory as that which crowned the action at Nujufgurh. 1857. August 25.

Congratulations upon this brilliant achievement poured in from all sides; but from none came they with greater heartiness and sincerity than from Sir John Lawrence, who wrote to him, saying: "Though sorely pressed with work, I write a line to congratulate you on your success. I wish I had the power of knighting you on the spot. It should be done. I hope you destroyed no end of villanous Pandies."* To this Nicholson replied, August 30, 1857: "Many thanks for your kind letter of the 27th. I would much rather earn the good opinion of my friends than any kind of honorary distinction. I enclose, for your perusal, and Edwardes's, the rough draft of my report. The field was of such extent, that it was not easy to estimate the mutineers' loss. I think, moreover, that they suffered more severely from the fire of our Artillery, after they had bolted across the bridge, than they did on the actual battle-field. . . . . Except where poor Lumsden was killed, they made little attempt to stand. Most of the killed were Kotah Contingent men. We took the Neemuch troop of artillery complete, three light field battery guns, and four of the King's Own. I wish sincerely that they had had as many more, as, after their flank was turned, they could not have used them, and must have lost them all." August 30.

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appear never to have returned to Delhi. Most of the officers with me in the action rated them at six, seven, and eight thousand men. My own idea is, that they were between three thousand and four thousand."—*Nicholson to Lawrence, August* 30, 1857.

* In this letter Lawrence writes: "Don't assault until you have given the mutineers all the powder and shot which the siege-train can spare, and then go in, and may God be with you all. I think if all the troops were warned not to disperse, it might have an effect upon them."

1857. August.

After this there was quiet for a little space in Camp. All men were looking eagerly for the arrival of the siege-train, and for those last reinforcements which Lawrence was sending down from the Punjab. Reports were floating about to the effect that the Bareilly Brigade was going out again, under Bukht Khan, to make another effort to intercept our convoys; but if this design were ever entertained it was soon abandoned, for it never developed into even the semblance of a fact; and all again was composure. There was not a soldier in camp who did not then feel that the time of waiting and watching had well-nigh passed—that we should soon assume the offensive in earnest, with ample means to secure success. Delhi now seemed to be in our grasp, and the spirits of men rose with the thought of the coming triumph. Then was it that the mess-tents of our officers rang with the loudest laughter; then was it that our military bands sent up their gayest music; then was it that the inactivity of a disheartened enemy gave unaccustomed repose to the besieging force; then the healthy could enjoy their books or games, and the sick and wounded could be brought to the doors of their tents to inhale the pleasant evening air, or take in the marvellous beauty of the "view from the Ridge." For nearly three months the great city, with its wealth of ordnance, had defied the best courage and the best skill of the English nation. We had been beaten by the material resources of an enemy, whom, without such aids, we could have crushed in a day. But now, as our Engineers brought all the appliances of their craft to bear upon the strengthening and securing of our positions, as the space between our siege-works and the city-walls was narrowed by their efforts, and breaching-batteries were rising under their hands, no man doubted that the coming month would see Delhi prostrate at our feet, and the consummation of our hopes gloriously accomplished. Again the supremacy of the English race in India, obscured only for a little while, was to be re-asserted and re-established; and there was not a white man in camp who did not long, with a great hunger of the heart, for the day when the signal would be given, and it would be left for our English manhood to decide for itself whether any multitude of Natives of India, behind their walls of masonry, could deter our legions from a victorious entrance into the imperial city of the Mogul. 1857. August.

APPENDIX.

THE LAST NUZZUR TO THE KING OF DELHI.—Page 12.

[From Mr. William Edwards' "Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian"—a work which contains much interesting and suggestive information relating to the rebellion in the North-West Provinces.]

"As soon as the camp arrived at Delhi, the Government durbar records were produced, in order that reference should be made to the etiquette followed as regarded the Emperor, on those previous rare occasions in which Governor-Generals had visited the imperial city. It was found that although the relative position of the Governor-General and the Emperor did not admit of their exchanging visits, yet that a deputation had been sent on the part of the Governor-General to ask after the health of his Majesty, and tender him a 'Nuzzur' of a certain amount of gold mohurs, which in reality amounted to an expression of submission and fealty on the part of the British Government to the Great Moghul, and an acknowledgment of holding our Indian possessions as his feudatory. As, however, this had been the usual practice, no question was raised as to its propriety; and therefore, without any previous intimation to the Governor-General of what was about to be done, Mr. Thomason and myself, accompanied by Colonel Broadfoot, proceeded to the palace on elephants, each being provided with a silk bag full of gold mohurs for presentation to the King. We were required to proceed without any shoes into the immediate presence—such having been in all ages in India the usual mark of respect on the part of an inferior on approaching a superior. On this occasion we compromised the matter by putting short worsted cashmere socks over our boots, and thus entered the hall of audience. On a curtain being drawn aside, we saw the old King, then apparently a very feeble old man above seventy years of age, seated on his throne, which was elevated so as to have the royal person, as he sat cross-legged, on a level with our faces. We made a low obeisance to the Emperor, and on approaching the throne, each in succession presented his bag of gold mohurs, and inquired after his Majesty's health and prosperity. I confess to a feeling of awe and solemnity passing over me as I stepped up and addressed this representative of a long line of kings and of a once powerful empire, and presented my Nuzzur to his Majesty's acceptance, which was remarkable as being the last that was ever offered on the part of a British subject to the imperial house of Timour. The King simply received it, and ordered us to be robed in dresses of honour, and to have turbans bound round our heads. This was done in due form ; we made our obeisance to the King, and departed. We remounted our elephants, and were paraded through the chief streets of Delhi as "those whom the King delighted to honour." The ridiculous transformation we had all three undergone, clad in these robes of tinsel tissue, drove all feelings of solemnity and respect out of my mind. I contrived to get ahead of my party, and stripping off my own finery as I sat on the howdah, made my way to the Governor-General's tent, to beg his lordship to come and see the chief secretary and Colonel Broadfoot as they arrived in camp, and before dismounting from their elephants, as these two estimable gentlemen looked as if they had gone suddenly mad, and decked themselves out in a manner worthy of 'Madge Wildfire.' The Governor-General begged me to explain what we had been doing, and on my informing him, his lordship's indignation and surprise were extreme; and then, for the first time, I myself became alive to the impropriety of an act which, in reality, made Queen Victoria, in Eastern estimation at least, hold her Indian possessions as a mere feudatory and vassal of the imperial house of Delhi.

The Governor-General immediately issued instructions, forbidding the presentation in future to the King of any offerings by British subjects, and directed me to ascertain the average annual amount of gifts received by his Majesty for the past ten years, in order that an equivalent amount should be added to the royal stipend from the British treasury in future. The Governor-General's measure was without doubt right and politic. The misfortune was that it had not been adopted years before."

CAPTAIN ROSSER AND THE FLIGHT TO DELHI.—Page 67.

[The following extracts from letters, addressed to the author, with reference to the statement referred to in the text, frequently made and never before, I believe, publicly contradicted, that the late Captain Rosser, of the Carabineers, had, on the 10th of May, proposed to take a squadron of his regiment and a troop of Horse Artillery, to cut off the flight of the mutineers to Delhi, afford a curious illustration of the difficulties which beset the path of the historical inquirer.]

Sir Archdale Wilson.

"It is certainly not true that Captain Rosser offered to take his squadron in pursuit of the mutineers bound for Delhi on the evening of the 10th of May, 1857—at least, to my knowledge—the first I ever heard of such a story being shown to me in some rough sheets of your History. Captain Rosser was a good and gallant officer, and may have made such an offer to his own immediate commanding officer, Colonel Custance, though I do not believe that any one of the force knew that evening that the mutineers had made for Delhi. I did not until the next morning."—*Dec.* 6, 1868.

Mr. Charles Raikes.

". . . . I had the good fortune to become well acquainted with Major Rosser during the voyage from India to Suez early in 1858. He told me in so many words what I asserted in my little work. It was not possible for me to doubt the statement of a man so modest, grave, and straightforward, of such high principle and solidity of character, and I, therefore, asserted as a fact what I believed and still believe to be true."—*Dec.* 17, 1868.

Colonel Custance.

"The late Major Rosser was a gallant and good officer, but he did not offer to take a detachment of Dragoons and Horse Artillery in pursuit of the mutineers escaping to Delhi on the 10th of May, 1857. Had he done so I must have known it, as I was his commanding officer."—*Dec.* 21, 1868.

[It was not thought necessary to pursue the inquiry any further. If the offer were not made by Captain Rosser to the commanding officer of his regiment or to the Brigadier commanding the station, it cannot have been made at all in any military—any public—sense, and certainly the proposal cannot have been officially recognised. But that, on the night of the 10th of May, Captain Rosser expressed his willingness to lead a mounted detachment to cut off the mutineers (though the offer may never have taken the regulation-shape), can hardly, I think, be questioned.]

SERVICES OF SYUD MEER KHAN.—Page 69.

"The Sirdar Behaudur, Syud Meer Khan Sahib, a pensioner receiving six hundred rupees a month, for aid rendered to the Caubul prisoners and good conduct in Afghanistan, who had, on hearing the disturbance, immediately joined the Commissioner, and offered to escort him to the European lines; but it was decided that there was no hope of the lady escaping through the crowd. He then went out to hold back the mob, and was shot through the thigh, and his horse mortally wounded. This fine Afghan was obliged to retire to the city. He came to the Dum-Dumma the next morning in spite of his wound, and was at the battles of the Hindun. When the mob attacked the house, the Commissioner and his wife, with the wife of one of the residents of the station, retired to the roof; when asked where their master and mistress were, the servants said that they had gone to church: though drawn swords were put to his throat, the Jemadar, Gholab Singh, persisted in this statement, and the other servants were faithfully silent regarding their master's presence."—*Report of Mr. Commissioner Williams.*

THE MURDER OF MR. FRASER.—Page 79.

[The following is the evidence of Buktawuss, or Bukhtawar Singh, Chuprassy, as given at the trial of the King ot Delhi.]

"I was the servant on duty supervising the repairs of the Fort ditch, and was going with the account book for Captain Douglas' inspection. I was on my way, when a trooper came galloping up from the direction of the Calcutta Gate. The trooper had not reached the Palace Gate when I observed that Captain Douglas was standing there. I saw Captain Douglas speaking to the man; but before I reached the Palace Gate myself the trooper turned his horse and rode off. Captain Douglas told me to go up to his apartments, and said that he was going to the interior of the Palace and should return immediately. Captain Douglas did so, and I stayed at the gate, Makhan, Kishan Singh and others accompanied him. Captain Douglas had hardly gone when Mr. Fraser arrived in his buggy and inquired for him. Mr. Fraser alighted and walked on through the covered way up to the opening. He then said to me he was going to the Calcutta Gate, and that I was to tell Captain Douglas so on his return. I then myself proceeded in the direction of the King's apartments and met Captain Douglas returning in a state of excitement. I gave him Mr. Frasor's message. Captain Douglas went to the Lahore Gate of the Palace, and told the Native officer on guard there to close it, which was done. Captain Douglas at the same time gave orders that no crowd was to be allowed to assemble on the bridge leading into the

Palace. Just about this time an officer of the King's, styled a captain, also came there from the direction of the main street of Delhi. The gate had been closed and Captain Douglas' buggy was inside, so he directed me to ask this Native officer for his buggy that he might go in it as far as the Calcutta Gate, whither Captain Douglas proceeded in it, I occupying the seat behind. At the Calcutta Gate we found Mr. Fraser, Mr. Nixon, head clerk, and four or five other gentlemen. The gate was closed after a short time. Mr. Fraser and Captain Douglas got into the buggy together, and were returning to the Palace accompanied by the other gentlemen on horseback, but had not proceeded far when four or five troopers came galloping up at full speed from the direction of the Ellenborough Tank. About this time, there was a general cry that the troopers had come. On reaching the party of gentlemen, one of the troopers wounded Mr. Hutchinson in the arm with a pistol shot; the others also fired, but without effect. On this Mr. Fraser and Captain Douglas both got out of the buggy and went out of the way of the mutineers, and stood by the guard-room of the Constabulary Force at the gate: two more gentlemen joined them there. Mr. Fraser got a musket from the Constabulary Force, and shot one of the troopers. This checked the others, and they turned and fled. A great crowd had by this time collected, and Captain Douglas and another gentleman jumped into the Fort ditch, along which they came on to the Palace Gate, Mr. Fraser and others coming by the road; but there was such confusion at the time, I can't say how. Captain Douglas was in a fainting state from the injuries he had received from jumping into the ditch, and we accordingly laid him on a bed in the Kuliyat Khana. In a short time Mr. Jennings, the clergyman, came down, and at his suggestion Captain Douglas was taken up to the apartments above the gate, where he was placed on a bed, Mr. Jennings sending the servants away, and telling them not to crowd about the place. We then received an order to go for the King's physician, and Abdulla Chuprassy fetched him accordingly. The physician, Ahsan Ullah Khan, had just left, when we servants who were sitting there saw some five

Mahomedans, King's servants, coming along the covered way calling out, 'Din, din!' Just at this time Mr. Fraser happened to come down to the foot of the stairs, and these men immediately attacked him and killed him with their swords. While this was happening on the north side of the gate, a mixed crowd, armed with swords, bludgeons, &c., ran up the stairs on the south side, and gained the apartments above, those assembled on the north side joining them there."

THE CIS-SUTLEJ CHIEFS.—Page 162.

[The further note on the loyal bearing of the Cis-Sutlej chiefs will be given in volume iii.]

REMOVAL OF CAPTAIN HODSON FROM THE GUIDE CORPS.—Page 182.

[The following passage from a letter written to Hodson's biographer by the Military Secretary to the Punjab Commissioner, explains fully the circumstances referred to in the text. After speaking of the question of the regimental accounts and the action of the Court of Inquiry, the writer proceeds to say:]

"Still, in so far as the inquiry was concerned, Major H., had he survived, might perhaps have commanded the Guides to this day. His removal was entirely another affair. In addition to the command of the Guides, Lieutenant H. held the office of Accountant Commissioner in civil charge of Euzofyze. Lieutenant Godby, of the Guides, was severely wounded by an assassin at Murdan, the Guides Corps station in December, 1853. The assassin was cut to pieces on the spot by some men of the corps. His body was identified, but all efforts to discover the motives of the miscreant or his abettors proved fruitless. Lieutenant Hodson's suspicions, however, fell upon Kader Khan, the Mullik of Tooroo (four miles distant from Murdan), the most wealthy and influential chief in Euzofyze. He even further entertained the hope of being able to convict this Kader Khan of having caused the murder of the late Colonel Mackeson; but finally, and after a lengthened imprisonment of seven months in the Peshawur gaol, Kader Khan was arraigned by him in the Commissioner's Court on one charge only, viz. that of having instigated the attack upon Lieutenant Godby. The case completely broke down; and the trial ended in a full acquittal. Lieutenant Hodson's proceedings were strongly condemned by Lord Dalhousie, who directed his dismissal from civil employ, and that he should not retain command of the Guides, it being incompatible with the public interests that he should ever again hold any position of authority in the district of Euzofyze, and that his getting another command thereafter should depend upon the result of the Military Court of Inquiry. The inquiry had not, however, closed so far as to produce any result, when the Court of Directors took notice of the trial of Kader Khan of Tooroo, and in conveying their approval of the Governor-General's decision upon it, they added their 'desire' that Lieutenant Hodson should not 'again be entrusted with any command whatever.' "

THE PUNISHMENT OF ALLAHABAD.—Page 270.

[From the "Travels of a Hindoo," by Bholanauth-Chunder. Edited by a Government Secretary, and dedicated to the Governor-General of India.]

"They speak of it as a fearful epoch of unexampled atrocities on the one side, and of an unparalleled retaliation on the other. There were the Sepoys with the blood of murdered officers on their heads, and budmashes and bullies, and cut-throats and cut-purses, all acknowledging a fraternal tie, and holding a bloody carnival. But it was impossible that twenty uncongenial parties, divided by quarrels about caste, quarrels about religion, quarrels about power, and quarrels about plunder, could long act together in an undisturbed concert. Soon as batch after batch of Englishmen arrived to re-establish the Saxon rule, they were driven like chaff before the wind. Then followed a dreadful sequel—the horror of horrors. The martial law was an outlandish demon, the like of which had not been dreamt of in Oriental demonology. Rampant and ubiquitous, it stalked over the land devouring hundreds at a meal, and surpassed in devastation the rakhasi, or female carnival of Hindoo fables. It mattered little whom the red-coats killed; the innocent and the guilty, the loyal and the disloyal, the well-wisher and the traitor, were confounded in one promiscuous vengeance. To 'bag the nigger,' had become a favourite phrase of the military sportsmen of that day. 'Pea-fowls, partridges, and Pandies rose together, but the latter gave the best sport. Lancers ran a tilt at a wretch who had taken to the open for his covert.' In those bloody assizes, the bench, bar, and jury were none of them in a bland humour, but were bent on paying off scores by rudely administering justice with the rifle, sword, and halter, making up for one life by twenty. The first spring of the British Lion was terrible, its claws were indiscriminating.

"One's blood still runs cold to remember the soul-harrowing and blood-freezing scenes that were witnessed in those days. There were those who had especial reasons to have been anxious to show their rare qualifications in administering drum-head justice, scouring through the town and suburbs, they caught all on whom they could lay their hands, porter or pedlar, shopkeeper or artisan, and hurrying them on through a mock trial, made them dangle on the nearest tree. Near six thousand beings had been thus summarily disposed of and launched into eternity, their corpses hanging by twos and threes from branch and sign-post all over the town, speedily contributed to frighten down the country into submission and tranquillity. For three months did eight dead-carts daily go their rounds from sunrise to sunset, to take down the corpses which hung at the cross-roads and market-places, poisoning the air of the city, and to throw their loathsome burdens into the Ganges. Others, whose indignation had a more practical turn, sought to make capital out of those troublesome times. The martial law was a terrible Gorgon in their hands to turn men into stone, the wealthy and timid were threatened to be criminated, and they had to buy up their lives as best they could under the circumstances."

PROCLAMATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF THE NANA SAHIB.

Page 351.

[The following extracts from the correspondence of Doondoo Punt, Nana Sahib, illustrate the means by which he endeavoured by a succession of boastful lies to stimulate the animosity and to sustain the courage of his followers. These papers were sent in by Nana Nerain Rao, of whom mention is made in the text, and placed in the hands of General Neill, who commissioned Major Gordon to translate them. The following is from the journal of that officer :]

"A relative of the Nana sent in a quantity of the Nana's property and ten of his horses from Bithoor this morning, and came himself and called on General Neill in the forenoon. He had been confined by the Nana. In the evening two boxes were brought in containing the whole of the Nana's correspondence, and his letter-book containing copies of all his orders, written in the Persian language. They have been made over to me, which is a rich treat; and I sat poring over these letters until eleven o'clock at night, and finished with the one in which he ordered the destruction of all Europeans who left in boats."

PROCLAMATION, DATED JULY 6TH.

"A traveller just arrived at Cawnpore from Calcutta, had heard that previous to the distribution of the cartridges, a council had been held for the purpose of depriving the Hindoostanees of their faith and religion. The members of the council came to the decision, since it was a matter affecting religion, it would be right to have seven or eight thousand European soldiers that fifty thousand Hindoostanees might be destroyed, and all (the rest) become Christians. This resolution was sent to Queen Victoria, and received her approval. Again another council was held, at which the English merchants assisted. It was here determined that the European force should be made equal to the Hindoostanee army (in numbers) so that when the contest took place there should be no fear of failure. When this representation (from the council) was read in England, thirty-five thousand soldiers were embarked in all haste and despatched to India, and the news of their departure has reached Calcutta. The Sahibs of Calcutta ordered the distribution of the cartridges with the especial object of making Christians of the Native army, so that when the army became Christians there would be no delay in making Christians of the ryots. These cartridges were rubbed over with the fat of pigs and cows. This fact has been asserted by Bengalees who were employed in the manufacture of the cartridges, and of those who related this, one has been executed and all the rest put into confinement. They (the Sahibs) made their arrangements here. This is the news from thence (Europe). The Turkish Ambassador wrote from London to the Sultan to inform him that thirty-five thousand men have been despatched to Hindoostan for the purpose of making Christians of the Hindoostanees. The Sultan of Room—may God perpetuate his sovereignty!—despatched a Firman to the Pasha of Egypt to this effect: 'You are an ally of Queen Victoria. But this is not the season for amity, inasmuch as my Ambassador writes that thirty-five thousand soldiers have been despatched to Hindoostan for the purpose of making Christians of the Native ryots and troops. Therefore, in this case, whilst a remedy is in my power, if I should be negligent, how shall I show my face to God? And this day (i.e. conjuncture) may some time or other be my own [meaning this may some day be his own case] since, if the English make the Hisdoostanees Christians, they will make an attempt on my dominions.'

"When the Pasha of Egypt received this Firman, he, previous to the arrival of the (English) force, assembled and organised his troops at Alexandria, which is on the road to Hindoostan. The moment the soldiers (English) appeared, the Pasha's troops opened an artillery fire upon them from all sides, and destroyed and sunk their ships, so that not a single soldier escaped.

"When the English at Calcutta had issued their order for the distribution of the cartridges, and the disturbances had arisen, they anxiously looked out for the troops from London to aid them. But the Almighty, in his perfect omnipotence, had already disposed of these. When the news of the slaughter of the army from London became known, the

Governor-General was greatly afflicted and distressed, and *thumped his head.*

"Persian Quatrain.—In the beginning of the night he possessed the power over life and property.—In the morning his body was without a head, and his head without a crown.—In one revolution of the cœrulean sphere neither *Nadir* (Shah*) remained nor any sign of him.

"Issued from Painted Garden of the Peishwah."

"*To Holas Sing, Cotwal of Cawnpore.*

"You are hereby ordered to make known within your jurisdiction, that whoever may have in his possession any property plundered from the English, such as chairs and tables, china and metal dishes, arms, buggies, medical apparatus, horses, and wood, or railway officers' property, such as beams, iron, wire, jackets, coats and trousers, goats and sheep, must, within four days, produce such property. Should any one secrete such things, and they be found hereafter in his house when searched, he will be visited with condign chastisement. Should any person have in his house an Englishman or any children (baba logue), he must produce them, and will not be questioned; but any person concealing the above, will be blown into the path of destruction from the cannon's mouth.

"Dated 4th Zikad, or 24th June."

[The following appears to have been written after the massacre at the Ghaut.]

"*To Rughoonath Sing, Bhowany Sing, &c.,*

"Officers of the Regiment at Seetapoor (Forty-first N. I.), and Wahid Ali Khan, Naib Ressaldar, First Irregular Cavalry, at Sikandra.

"Greeting,—Your petition, presented by Meer Punah Ali, has been received. Its contents have become known to me. The report of your bravery and gallantry has given me great pleasure, 'much praise be yours, thus should you ever act, thus let men act.' Here (Cawnpore) this day 4th Zikad (27th June), the white faces have fought with us. The whole of them, by the grace of God, and the destroying fortune of the Jing, have entered hell. A salute in honour of this event has been fired as *usual*. It behoves you also to celebrate this victory with rejoicings and peals of artillery. Moreover, your request for permission to fight with the infidels has given me great satisfaction. In a few days, when order shall have been restored in this district, the victorious force which has now swelled to a large army, still daily increasing, will cross the Ganges, continue to hem in the infidels until the arrival of my camp. This event will take place shortly; and then display all your valour. Bear in mind that the people pertain to both faiths. They must be neither molested nor injured in any way. Have a care to protect them, collect supplies, and keep them in readiness.

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* Play upon words—"Nadir," if I remember rightly, is the zenith.—*Translator.*

"Dated 4th Zikad St. 1273, 27th June, 1857."

"*To Holas Singh, Cotwal.*

Whereas, by the grace of God and fortune of the king, all the English at Poona and in Punna have been slain and sent to hell, and five thousand English who were at Delhi have been put to the sword by the royal troops. The Government is now everywhere victorious; you are, therefore, ordered to proclaim these glad tidings in all cities and villages by beat of drum, that all may rejoice on hearing them. All cause for apprehension is now removed.

"Dated 8th Zikad, 1st July, 1857."

"*To Baboo Rambuksh, Talooqdar, Dhondia Khera, Oude.*

"Greeting.—Your petition dated 6th Zikad (29th June), reporting the slaughter of the English, and the deaths in battle of your brother Sudhainan Sing, with two officers, and also begging for my favour as a reward for your self-devotion, has been perused. You are hereby informed, that I also am grieved at your loss, but the will of God must be submitted to. Moreover, this event (the death of his brother) has happened in the cause of Government, and you will ever remain the object of my protection. Have no manner of fear, Government will certainly befriend you.

"Dated 10th Zikad, or 3rd July, 1857."

" *To Holas Sing, Cotwal.*

"Whereas sundry persons of the town, on hearing the report of European troops having marched from Allahabad, are abandoning their homes and seeking shelter in villages, you are hereby ordered to have proclaimed throughout the town that infantry, cavalry, and artillery have marched to repel the English. Wherever they may be met, at Futtehpore, Allahabad, or wherever they may be, the revenging force will thoroughly punish them. Let all remain without fear in their homes, and pursue their usual avocations.

"Dated 12th Zikad, or 5th July, 1857."

" *To the Officers of the Army.*

"I have been greatly pleased with your zeal, valour, and loyalty. Your labours are deserving of the highest praise. The organisation and scale of pay and rewards established here will have likewise to be established for you. Let your minds be at rest, all promises made will be fulfilled. Troops of all arms have this day crossed the Ganges *en route* to Lucknow; you will be aided in every possible way to slay the unbelieving Nazarines, and despatch them to hell. The greatest reliance is placed on your readiness and bravery to secure victory. On receipt of this order, certify to me, under your hand and seal, that you have learned its contents, and are ready to co-operate in the destruction of the infidels. Have no fears as regards ordnance stores. Any amount of ammunition and heavy guns is available. Shurf-ood-Dowlah and Ali Reza Beg, Cotwal of Lucknow, have been ordered to supply provisions. They will do so; but should they fail in this duty inform me, and a conspicuous example will be made of them. All of you display valour and fortitude. May victory speedily crown your efforts, thus shall I myself be at liberty to proceed towards Allahabad. There can be no hesitation on your part or on mine. After this rapid success, march to Allahabad and conquer there.

"Dated 14th Zikad, 7th July, 1857."

"*To Kalkapershad, Canoongoe—Oude.*

"Greeting.—Your petition has been received, stating that seven boats containing Europeans were going down the river from Cawnpore, and that two parties of your men who were at the spot joined the Government troops and fired on them so unremittingly that they proceeded, slaying the English the whole way, as far as the villages of Abdool Azeez, when the horse artillery and yourself in person joined the rest, and sank six of the boats, the seventh escaping through the force of the wind. You have performed a great deed, and I am highly pleased with your conduct. Persevere in your devotion to the Government cause. This order is sent you as a mark of favour. Your petition, with which a European was sent in, has also reached me. The European has been sent to hell, thus adding to my satisfaction.

"Dated 16th Zikad, or 9th July, 1857."

"*To the Thanadar of Sirsoul.*

"The victorious army of Government had marched towards Allahabad to oppose the Europeans, and it has now been reported that the latter have deceived the Government troops, attacked and scattered them. Some troops are said to remain there; you are, therefore, ordered to instruct the landholders in your jurisdiction and in Futtehpore, that every brave man should join heart and hand to defend his faith, to put the Europeans to the sword, and send them to hell. Conciliate all ancient influential landholders, and persuade them to unite in the cause of their religion to slay and send to hell all the infidels. Moreover, tell them that Government will give every man his due, and that those who assist it shall be rewarded.

"Dated 20th Zikad, 13th July, 1857."

"*To the Bahadoors and Officers of Cavalry, Artillery, and Infantry at Lucknow.*

"Greeting.—A force of about one thousand British, with several guns, were marching towards Cawnpore from Allahabad. To arrest and slay these men an army was despatched. The British are advancing rapidly. On both sides men fall wounded or killed. The Europeans are now within seven koss of Cawnpore, and the field of battle is warmly contested. It is reported that Europeans are coming up the river in steamers, and strong defences have consequently been constructed without the town of Cawnpore. Here my troops are prepared, and at a distance the battle rages; you are, therefore, informed that the aforesaid British are opposite the district of Baiswara, on this bank of the river. It is very probable that they may attempt to cross the Ganges. You must, for this reason, send some troops into the Baiswara country to shut them in on that side. My force will press them from this direction, and by this combined action the slaughter of the infidels may be achieved, as is most desirable.

"Should these people not be destroyed, there can be no doubt they will press on to Delhi. Between Cawnpore and Delhi there is no one that could stand against them. We must without fail combine to destroy them root and branch.

"It is also said that the British may cross the Ganges; some English still remain in the Bailey Guard and maintain the fight, whereas here there is not a living English person left. Send troops immediately across the river, at Sheorajpore, to surround and cut up the Europeans.

"Dated 23rd Zikad, or 16th July, 1857."

[This is the last of the series. On that same evening Havelock's force encamped near Cawnpore, and whilst victory was being proclaimed by the Nana's order in the city, he himself was flying for his life, and his followers were being dispersed in all directions.]

RECRUITING AT PESHAWUR.—Page 492.

[The following is the paragraph in Colonel Edwardes's Mutiny Report, to which reference is made in the text. There is no contribution to the history of the great Crisis in the Punjab more valuable or more interesting than the document from which this extract is made:]

"Delhi was not to be recovered by a *coup de main.* The Hindoo Sepoys, having mutinied about a cartridge, had nothing to propose for an empire, and fell in of necessity with the only policy that was feasible at the moment, a Mahomedan King of Delhi; and certainly no other policy could have given such life to the coming struggle. Hitherto the question had been purely domestic between the English and their Hindoostanee army, a quarrel in which the Afghan tribes would merely desire to be on the conquering side. But a war between the Moslem and the Christian for empire must needs agitate every village in which there was a mosque and a moollah; and the city of Peshawur in particular, with its sixty thousand inhabitants, had always been a hotbed of intrigue. Humanly speaking, I consider that the border at this critical period was mainly kept under by the levying of a militia. Afghans are fanatical, but avarice is their ruling passion. Every idle vagrant, every professional robber, every truculent student in the mosques, at whose finger-ends fanaticism was beginning to tingle, found a market for his sword. The population of the Peshawur Valley had never been disarmed. Being liable to raids from their neighbours, they had been allowed to keep arms in their houses; though none but outside villagers might wear arms abroad, It was not difficult, therefore, to collect any number of armed footmen at a short notice. Good horses are not plentiful in this irrigated country; but the head men of every village have two or three hacks, and the enlistment of their farm servants on these rips, attached all the hamlets, one by one, to our cause, and got up quite a hearty feeling, such as certainly I never saw before among them. One can smile now at the scenes that took place morning and evening at the hours of enlistment. It was necessary to sustain the dignity of the Imperial

Government even in our distress. Long before the time crowds of candidates for employment thronged the gateways and overflowed into the garden, the jockeys of unconquerably vicious horses endeavouring to reduce them to a show of docility by galloping them furiously about till the critical moment of inspection came. At last, sick at heart from the receipt of a bad telegram from the provinces, but endeavouring to look happy, out I used to go, and face some hundreds of the chiefs and yeomen of the country, all eager to gather from the Commissioner Sahib's countenance how the 'King of Delhi' was getting on. Then the first horseman would be brought up. The beast perhaps would not move. The rider, the owner, and all the neighbours would assail him with whips, sticks, stones, and Pushtoo reproaches that might have moved a rock; but nothing would do till the attempt was given up, and the brute's head turned the other way, when he went off at a gallop amid roars of laughter from the Pathans, who have the keenest perception of both fun and vice. No. 2 would make a shift to come up, but every man and boy in the crowd could see that he was lame on two or three legs. Then the argument began, and leg by leg, blemish by blemish, the animal was proved by a multitude of witnesses (who had known him for very many years) to be perfectly sound; and so the enlistment went on from day to day, affording immense occupation, profit, and amusement to the people, and answering a great many good ends. Now and then an orderly of the Hindoostanee Irregular Cavalry, admirably armed and mounted, would pass the spot, and mark his opinion of the 'levies' by a contemptuous smile. But, nevertheless, he told his comrades in the lines that the country people were all with the English, and it was of no use to desert or to intrigue."

SIR HENRY BARNARD'S LAST LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.—Page 569.

[The following letter was written to Lord Canning by Sir H. Barnard, three days before his death. He seems to have desired that, in the event of his demise, its contents should be made known to the world:]

"Camp above Delhi, July 2, 1857.

"MY DEAR LORD CANNING;—Ere this reaches you, the business here will have been settled; if successfully, well; if a failure, I shall like to leave behind me a brief record of the service of the little force.

"The work of reduction or re-occupation of Delhi was evidently greatly under-estimated. Delhi, when once its gates were shut, and its immense arsenal and magazine in the hands of insurgent troops, became a formidable operation to reduce. When added to this the passions of the people were roused, and the cry raised of a new 'Mogul dynasty,' it became as important as formidable.

"With means totally inadequate, this force was sent against it, reinforced by detachments from Meerut, who were to have provided sappers, gunners, and field implements; when all had formed a junction the force barely arrived at three thousand eight hundred. Meerut sent no gunners, and only a small number of sappers, and these unprovided. On the 8th June we started from Alipore, met the enemy at Budlie-ka-Serai, and from thence drove them from the height above Delhi. Here the Commanding Artilleryman and Chief Engineer proposed to commence the attack; batteries were planned and erected, but the distance was too great. After eight days, I found the side of the town which must be silenced before we got approaches quite as alive as ever. The Artilleryman admitted the distance too great, and the Engineer his inability to make batteries, having positively not a single sandbag! I was promised reinforcements, and for their arrival I determined to wait. They have arrived, and now comes the decisive moment, and I confess to you I never was so puzzled. The force I have amounts to about five thousand, and comprises almost all the Europeans in the Upper Provinces; quite enough, if free, to re-establish the country, but quite insufficient to storm Delhi, guard the camp, and keep open my communications with the rear for supplies, &c. If I succeed in the gambler's throw, well and good, but if I fail, the game is up, and all I can expect to be able to do would be to effect an honourable retreat, carrying off sick, wounded, and guns. To add to my distresses, dissatisfaction is proved to exist in the Native troops just arrived, and some have been detected in trying to tamper with the men of Coke's Corps. These fellows are to be hanged to-night; but the Ninth Irregular Cavalry and some of the Seikh Corps are known to be tainted, and would like an opportunity of doing us any mischief they could. Thus it is, with enemies without, traitors within, and a task before me I cannot in reason feel my force competent to undertake, I am called upon to decide. Much is said about the Native character and aptitude at turning tail, but where the treasure is I fear the heart will be found also, for all these miscreants are laden with plunder they will not abandon, and they know full well that every man's hand is against them. They dare not fly.

"My men are very tired; we have had since the action of Budlie-ka-Serai no less than ten affairs, seven of which employed my whole force, cavalry and infantry; in each we experienced heavy loss, but inflicted greater. The traitors are, or rather were, tired; they openly said it was no use fighting, and that unless assisted they would fly in four days. Yesterday brought them the Bareilly people, so we shall have our eleventh to-morrow. After that I think the game is over. The Gwaliors are not coming on, and we shall have defeated them all in turn. But to be useful I must enter the city, and this will, I am fearful, be a sanguinary affair, for it is clear the Sepoy knows well how to fight behind stone walls.

"I hope to hear of the head of the European columns coming up from Calcutta, and then matters will begin to look up again.

"Pray excuse this scrawl; it is written in a gale of wind. The rain has fallen for two days, but it is again fine.

"Very truly yours,

"H. BARNARD."

ADDENDA.

THE BENARES RAJAHS.

[The following extract, from an important paper furnished to me by a distinguished officer of the Bengal Civil Service, with large experience in the North-Western Provinces, should have been inserted in its proper place in the Appendix, with reference to page 231 of this narrative:]

"How, whence, or wherefore the notion of disloyalty attached to the Rajah of Benares and his predecessors was a mystery. It was something like an epidemic. Whatever others might have said and done, the present one had received a good English education, was pleasant and gentlemanly, liberal in the matter of public entertainments and contributions. Yet, somehow, he was not popular with officials, the cantonment, or the city. The only persons who seemed to commend him were the missionaries of Segra, who at least dwelt nearest to his ordinary residence at Ramnuggur.

"By slow degrees I got some enlightenment on the subject. When the administration of the Benares Province was made over to British officers, it was covenanted that the Rajah should retain a special jurisdiction over certain tracts called 'the family domains;' that a fixed sum should be given him for the maintenance of his own official establishment, and a fixed rent-charge on the whole province. Now the Collector of Benares, from whose treasury the disbursements were made, had a very weak establishment, and was always longing to supplement the deficiency from the Rajah's allowance. It was a constant source of contention—the two establishments, or a portion, were under the same roof, and assistance was often exacted. Unhappily, too, Mr. Thomason lent himself to a project for a compulsory cession. It appeared to me the public faith was pledged; the original covenant was brought up, its terms were clear; the perpetuity and unchangeableness absolutely expressed. In fine, the Court of Directors affirmed this judgment, and this question was ended. . . .

"When, after some years of better acquaintance, I was about to leave Benares, I asked him to explain this still unsolved, mysterious adhesion of disloyalty to his predecessors and himself, and if he was aware of it. His answer was remarkable: 'It is so, it must be so, it always will be so, but I cannot as a point of honour explain the reason. You know as well as I do that the British Government made this Raj, and if that Government went down, where would the Raj be?'

"So we parted, and I left Benares no wiser on this point than when I came. At last, by the merest accident, I got the clue.

"In 1857, when we were immured in Agra Fort, and it was my duty to control every item of disbursement, an applicant for his pension was announced: 'The Rajah of Benares!' 'Who on earth are you?' 'The Rajah of Benares, Bulum Bahadur. Come for my pension of two thousand rupees per mensem.' I asked him to bring me all his papers; he had no hesitation, and was, in fact, abundantly communicative.

"Now, never once had the real Rajah of Benares given me the least hint of any such person's existence. Yet here was the grandson of the rebel Cheyt Sing, whose expulsion had been followed by the substitution of the present line, receiving a Government bounty conditionally, like Shimei of old, on his not crossing the boundary of the Agra district, and he had contrived to get copies of secret papers, from which it appeared that the Court of Directors, perhaps in alarm at Burke's vituperation, had of their own motion granted this allowance to the family of the deposed rebel. In reading these papers, it recurred to me that on one occasion, when I went to visit the famous fort of Bejegurh, Cheyt Sing's last stronghold, an elephant and palanquin were there at the foot of the hill, which moved off at my approach, and which did not return, when I sent a message to the party begging him not to consider my presence a hindrance. So I made a shot and taxed Bulum Bahadur with being that party. After much hesitation he allowed I was right, and was immensely relieved that we had both gone to the same place, seeing that his grandfather and mine (who was at the capture) had once been there, and Shimei's fate should not be his. After which, Bulum Bahadur was full of intelligence. He, of course, was brimful of loyalty, while 'that other man,' as he called him, was head and chief in all the mutinies and local rebellions, and closely associated with the Nana. It was one of our amusements in the intelligence department, with which the Rajah of Benares was keeping up communication at great personal expense, and all the more valuable that we had no other, except *viâ* Bombay, to have B. B.'s grave reports of 'that other man's' defections.

"Not long afterwards came another accidental elucidation. The records of the Revenue Board had been gotten into the Fort and stowed anyhow in its recesses. When there was leisure for some arrangement, some papers turned up which had belonged to the old Benares Residency. Amongst them was some secret correspondence with Lord Cornwallis, and this with others explained the mystery.

"The Benares Raj originated with Munsa Ram, a small landowner of Gungapoor. By the ability of Bulwunt Sing, and repeated cessions of the Nawaub Vizier, it extended to the whole province, and Bulwunt Sing fixed his hold of it by alliance with the English—a defection not forgiven nor forgotten by Oude.

"Bulwunt Sing was succeeded by Cheyt Sing, who quarrelled with his minister, Owsan Sing, the grandfather of Deenarayun Sing. The minister took part with Hastings, Cheyt Sing intrigued with Francis.

"Then followed Hastings's journey to Benares, the arrest of Cheyt Sing, his rescue, rebellion, defeat, and flight to Gwalior, and the selection of his successor. Hastings thought it due to Bulwunt Sing to choose his daughter's son, Maheep Narayun. Had he followed the usage and traditions of the tribe, he would have reverted to the next male line of Deyaram, of which Koonr Juggut Sing was the representative.

"That might have passed away into oblivion, on the admitted principle that if the paramount Government can depose, it can also choose; but, unfortunately, Maheep Narayun, jealous of Koonr Juggut Sing's greater popularity, basely endeavoured, and for the time succeeded, in implicating Koonr Juggut Sing in Vizier Alee's rebellion. He was deported to Calcutta, and, according to some accounts, died in gaol; to others, committed suicide. Ultimately, Government gave a pension to his family, and Baboo Futteh Narayun, a worthy, harmless old gentleman, his descendant, is still resident at Benares.

"When I next visited Benares, I told the Rajah the discoveries I had made. He was not a little astonished, but, after many throes, spoke out to this effect: 'Of course I knew all about Bulum Bahadur, his visit to Bejegurh, and his detestation of "that other man." But is he not the lineal male descendant of Bulwunt Sing? What am I that I should complain? I am an interloper according to the laws of the Boenhar tribe, and generally may pass, but we shall be interlopers still. By favour of the British Government we might get over this, but the memory of Koonr Juggut Sing's fate will never pass away. It can never leave the city of Benares, nor can the secession of Bulwunt Sing ever be forgotten in Lucknow. If you want me to be hanged as a traitor, you will get plenty of aid in those quarters.' 'But, surely,' I said, 'Baboo Futteh Narayun Sing would not lend himself to any such intrigue?' 'No, on no account,' he replied; but he pleasantly added: 'He is always incurring debts, and I, of course, shall pay them as hitherto.' 'Well,' I said, 'I hope you and Deenarayun Sing will be always good friends.' He smiled. 'Certainly; but, remember, Owsan Sing betrayed Cheyt Sing.'

"Of course nothing of this inner revelation of Native character had been made to Mr. Tucker or Mr. Gubbins, and it is not surprising that neither of them formed just estimates of the two leading men of Benares during the mutinies. Mr. Tucker was too apt to consider physical activity an element of loyalty, Mr. Gubbins was extreme in his likes and dislikes; the consequence was, where, as the result subsequently proved, both had done their duty, one was extravagantly commended, the other disparaged.

"Deenarayun Sing behaved nobly; but he had only a house in Benares, his landed estates were in another district out of harm's way. The other had an extensive district to protect; his treasures were plundered to the cry of 'The

Nawaubee!' and his measures for protection were regarded with suspicion.

"When the political atmosphere was clear, and George Edmonstone's cool judgment was available, the circumstances and the individuals were better considered. I can only give the general result, for I had quitted India before. The Rajah of Benares was promoted to the rank of Maha-Rajah, and his salute restored to its integrity. Deenarayun Sing was confirmed in the dignity of Rajah, and honoured with a seat in the Legislative Council, but the proposal of the local officers to confer on him a territory larger than many English counties was reduced to more reasonable proportions. Good old Futteh Narayun Sing, who did his best, also had a liberal grant assigned him."

CEREMONIAL USAGES OF THE DELHI FAMILY.

[The following is the interesting note referred to at page 24:]

"21, Mecklenburgh-square, W.C., June 29, 1870.

"MY DEAR AND RESPECTED FRIEND,—I am in receipt of your favour of yesterday, and am glad to give you as much information as I can on the point in question.

"It is not the fact 'that since the time of Timour no member of the family, who had been in any manner mutilated, could sit upon the throne.' The best proof of which is, that all the Mogul Emperors, from Timour down to Humayun, were circumcised. The reason why the Mogul Emperors and Princes discontinued the rite of circumcision is as follows:

"About the time of the birth of the Emperor Akbar, his father, Humayun, being engaged in a war with Shere Shah, was compelled by the latter to fly from India and take refuge in Persia. History tells us that Humayun and Akbar were placed in such circumstances that the former could get no opportunity of having his son (Akbar) circumcised, and when Humayun recovered the throne of Delhi, his son was somewhat about twelve years of age, so that the proper time of circumcision had expired. In addition to this circumstance, the death of Humayun, which took place not more than about six months after his retaking Delhi, rendered the people indifferent as to the above rite not having been performed, as, in fact, Mahomedans do not consider it so important or indispensable a right as the Jews do.

"The intermarriages with the Hindoo princely families of India, a custom introduced by Akbar, caused the Imperial family to adopt many Hindoo customs and ceremonies, the consequence being that the male issue from the Hindoo princesses were, according to the Hindoo religion, not circumcised. After a few generations, this Hindoo custom became so prevalent in the Imperial family, that not a single member of the whole Mogul Dynasty was circumcised—a circumstance which produced a superstitious notion among the common people that the Royal family were not circumcised because mutilation was considered a bad omen.

"Prince Fukhroodin was circumcised on account of an affection . . . . . .; but this circumstance could be no bar to his coming to the throne. Bahaudoor Shah was a mere puppet in the hands of his consort; and this latter, who opposed Fukhroodin being nominated heir-apparent, originated this merely nominal objection.

"Hoping that the information that I have been able to give on the point will be found satisfactory,

"*Believe me, ever very truly yours,*

"SYED AHMED.

"J. W. KAYE, Esq."

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